University of Alberta

The Modesty Code Schema in Egypt: Cultural Transmission and Transformation

by

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Abstract

The focus of this study is culture, its replication, relative stability and transmission using the Modesty Code schema as a case study in Egypt. The Modesty Code schema is a deeply internalized, complex classificatory system, composed of a connectionist network of interwoven representations (both mental and public) wherein all members share an interpretive family resemblance in ideas, meanings, attitudes, values, behaviors, and so on. The selective representations of this schema are cognitively conditioned (through inculcation, banking education and coercion) during the socialization process. During the process of socialization, both vertical and horizontal, the transmission of selective representations can and do become unconsciously internalized in the individual, such that, rather than the individual 'holding' a representation, they are 'held by' the representation, or in this case that which is composed of many representations, a schema. This has resulted in a specifically filtered conceptualization of reality that cognitively funnels individuals into a particular way of seeing and being seen that has become instantiated in a segment of the population of Egypt. This study identifies ten factors that have contributed to the spatial and temporal stabilization of the Modesty Code schema.

Despite the fact the Modesty Code schema has a cognitive hegemony in Egypt, it is no longer as stable as it used to be. In fact it has become, for many, a 'dead model' as evidenced by the ubiquitous use of the cloaking device strategies of, façade presentation of adherence and the modesty mask, as a survival strategy. Consequently, the rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema has increased thereby further facilitating its destabilization.

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GLOSSARY of TERMS

SELECTED SIGNIFICANT ARABIC TERMS

Eid: an Islamic celebration. *Eid al-Fitr* occurs at the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting.

'eyb: shame; (*'aar*: sexual shame)

fadiiha: means 'to open', 'to expose', 'to declare'. In relation to shame it means scandal.

Fellahin: plural for Egyptian peasant or agricultural laborer

fitnah: a chaotic force

Hajj: Annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.

halal: allowed; permissible

haram: forbidden

kaid: a strategy of deception and manipulation

kulana: get together

mahr: a dowry given by the male to the female he is to marry. It is part of the Islamic marriage contract.

shaykh: elder (male); the feminine is *shaykha*

sharmoota: whore

Sirr: secret

tahara: means to purify, clean. *Tahara sunna* refers to clitoridectomy.

targees: patching; an idiom used in Upper Egypt to refer to hymen reconstruction

yaneerish: cheating; used to refer to hymen reconstruction

zina: illicit sexual intercourse, premarital or extramarital

SELECTED NON-ARABIC TERMS

Causal chains: a term used by Sperber (1996:83) to refer to a network of concrete representations (a strain or family) that are related by both "causal relationships and by similarity of content". These networks are composed of two types of causal links: from mental to public and from public to mental. See Sperber (1996a:26-28) .

Cognitive conditioning: is a term I have coined to refer to an aspect of the socialization process. In this study, it specifically refers to the process of imparting selective information (through the usage of three concurrent methods: banking education, coercion and inculcation) and to the process of ensuring individuals implement or act upon that information (for example, are motivated to act according to its dictates). In this sense, cognitive conditioning refers to both the encoding process and the execution of that encoding.

Endo: is a Greek term meaning 'inside', 'within'. It refers to a specific internalized interwoven complex classificatory system composed of paradigmatic representations (both mental and public) that share an interpretive family resemblance in ideas and meanings determined by the common semblance of inclusion, enclosure, containment, sameness, purity. Endo, as a schema, is a model of and for cognitive, behavioral, social and environmental interaction.

Internalization: the process by which cultural representations have become part of the individual, that is, become part of what is perceived to be right and true.

Replicate or reproduce: refers to the process of transformation of representations - irrespective of how slow the rate or imperceptible it may be.

Schema: the term schema is based on D'Andrade's (1992:29) definition cited in D'Andrade (1995:142): "a distinct and strongly interconnected pattern of interpretive elements can be activated by minimal inputs. A schema is an interpretation which is frequent, well organized, memorable, which can be made from minimal cues, contains one or more prototypic instantiations, is resistant to change, etc."

Sentinel mechanisms: Strategic tactics used to monitor and enforce adherence to a schema through cognitive and behavioral control and manipulation.

Strains: refers to a family of representations related by causal relationships and by similarity of content such that they can be seen as versions of one another. See Sperber 1996 for further elaboration.

Successful: as in "successful reproduction", refers to the stabilization of certain representations such that they have become endemically and/or epidemiologically instantiated into a population.

INTRODUCTION

> The illiterates of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn. Alvin Toffler

The focus of this study is culture, its replication, relative stability, and transmission, using the Modesty Code[1] in Egypt as an exemplar. The overall findings are that the uniquely configured cultural representations that comprise the Modesty Code schema are transmitted from generation to generation and from one person to another within a population, through communication or imitation, and through a process of cognitive conditioning and internalization that is part of the socialization process[2]. Environmental factors reinforce the replication, stability, and transmission of these cultural representations. This replication of the cultural representations comprising the Modesty Code schema is evidenced by their on-going presence and continuing dispersal within a population, in this case a segment of the population in Egypt. But the evidence also points to considerable stress experienced by males and females as they are faced with expectations of conforming to Modesty Code schema patterns in contemporary Egypt. This stress suggests that continuation of the Modesty Code as a cognitive and cultural schema may be under threat.

The research conducted for this dissertation was interdisciplinary. The fields of concentration are Intercultural/International Education and Cultural/Cognitive Anthropology. The overall theoretical framework is drawn primarily from cultural (cognitive) anthropology. The main educational components of this dissertation focus on the process of cognitive conditioning that occurs during socialization including the internalization and impact of that conditioning; and the role the process plays in facilitating replication, maintenance, and transmission of the cultural representations that comprise the Modesty Code schema. However, consideration has been given to the relationship between education and the Modesty Code schema, and its impact on education and development.

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Globally, in part due to the currently unfolding techno-communications revolution, we are undergoing changes unprecedented in their power and momentum. Transportation and communications technology is being transformed and all individuals and nations are undergoing challenges to respond to resulting societal changes. One result of this technological expansion has been rapid cultural diffusion, accelerating the process of cultural leveling, a process whereby cultures change and become more similar globally.

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[1] The Modesty Code has been defined narrowly as a purdah (seclusion and veiling) or as a behavioral code; it has also been discussed in broader terms. This is addressed in the Modesty Code literature review.

[2] Sperber (1996a) refers to the generation to generation transmission as 'vertical' and the transmission within an existing population as 'horizontal'.

Yet cultural diffusion is not a one-way street nor is it limited to industrial and technological aspects of culture; there is also a diffusion of ideas. This rapid diffusion of ideas enables greater numbers of individuals to experience an increased exposure to a multiplicity of alternative paradigms of reality. This fact alone impacts all domains of human life.

Our current rapid techno-communications transformation and the challenges of adaptation this entails may be particularly demanding for South nations. One reason for this is that, in many South nations, traditions still exist the foundations of which are thousands of years old. As such, they are firmly embedded and interwoven into the fabric of everyday lives of many South nation peoples. As a result, some subscribers of deeply-rooted traditions are resistant to change, which has been markedly noted when it involves nonmaterial culture (Henslin 1995:48). More simply put, the observation is that there is more resistance noted among some humans in the conceptual domain than in economic and technological domains. This resistance to conceptual change (and their associated behaviors) raises some interesting issues from cognitive, cultural, and pedagogical perspectives.

One way to explore and examine the resistance by individuals to conceptual change is to investigate a particular phenomenon that some individuals continue to accept, adhere to, and transmit, despite existing alternatives and the changing world around them. With this rationale, deeply ingrained cultural traditions, and other strictly held ideas and behaviors that have persisted through time, are subjects for investigation.

LOCUS OF THE FIELDWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Following the above logic, I conducted research within a South nation context, specifically Egypt. Egypt, geographically located in North Africa but encompassing the fusion of an African, Middle Eastern, and circum-Mediterranean cultural milieu, has many traditions that persevere whose foundations are thousands of years old and solidly grounded through interweaving and interpenetrating into the fabric of everyday lives of the inhabitants. The 'Modesty Code schema' is a case in point and was the cognitive-cultural phenomenon explored in the field. In Egypt, the dynamic interplay between tradition and change is a process touching all domains of life; the conflict it generates continues to be very much alive. As El Hodda (1994:15) says, Egypt is "caught at the crossroads of a cultural crisis".

To address these issues in the field, then, the specific *research question* was twofold:

Firstly, to ascertain what the Modesty Code is - as perceived and experienced in Egypt by various sectors of the population;

Secondly, to determine why the acceptance, adherence, and transmission of, the Modesty Code schema has been so successful[3] temporally and spatially. In other words, what are the determinants of the stability of the Modesty Code phenomenon?

Added to this central research focus was consideration of questions of the Modesty Code's impact on education and on individual, social, and economic development.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCHER

Initial research interest in the Modesty Code schema resulted from my personal experiences and observations as a teenager living in Kenya in the 1970's. At that time, my involvement with the Modesty Code schema in Kenya provided insight into the fact that there was an intricately interwoven network composed of various components: cognitive (conceptualizations, perceptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs), behavioral, and institutional, that were operating on explicit, tacit, and unconscious levels. Moreover, in my understanding at that time, it was the underlying cognitive influences that were driving the Modesty Code schema. These experiences provided me with a unique insider/outsider experiential base of understanding of the internal cognitive-cultural dynamics at play, but I was left with many questions to address through more formal research.

As a result, I have conducted related and ongoing academic research[4] on specific aspects of the Modesty Code schema since 1987, with a focus on the cultural-environmental areas of the Middle East, Africa (in particular North and East), and the Circum-Mediterranean region. This led to further research on specific aspects of the Modesty Code schema in a North American context, specifically in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, in which 16 months of fieldwork was undertaken in the Canadian-Arab community.[5] This research was grounded in the domains of courtship, marriage, and sexual knowledge transmission. This dissertation, then, is a continuation[6] and further in-depth study undertaken in Egypt of the Modesty Code schema and, the persistent acceptance, adherence, and transmission of the Modesty Code schema by certain segments of the population.

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[3] The term 'successful' does not imply 'exact replication'. That may be the case in biology for example with the "transmission of stable diseases or diseases with limited and foreseeable variations". However, when dealing with cultural representations and their replication, mutation or transformation is not an anomaly, but rather the norm (Sperber 1996a:58). Therefore, my usage of the term 'successful' refers to the stabilization of certain cultural representations that have become endemic in a population.

[4] With respect to the Modesty Code schema, the areas of research concentration that I have focused on throughout the years are its diverse cognitive, behavioral, and institutional expressions and the relationships between these. I have a specific interest in the process of cognitive conditioning and all that implies. See the following paragraph on page four. This interest was also explored with reference to the Modesty Code schema.

[5] See Collins 1996, 1997.

[6] Although the research conducted in Egypt generated data that are comparable to the Kenya Modesty Code schema experiences and observations and the Canadian-Arab research findings, a thorough comparative analysis is not included here.

Prior to and concurrent with the academic research on the Modesty Code schema, my personal and academic research has been and continues to be conducted in another area of long term interest, the field of cognitive science (an interdisciplinary field of the scientific study of the mind). The particular areas of investigation that I have focused my attention in are cognitive conditioning (and de-conditioning)[7] including the internalization and impact of that conditioning, and the role this plays in facilitating replication, stability, and the transmission of said conditioned cultural representations; the nature and range of human perceptual abilities and influence; the domains of cognitive conceptualization and varying paradigms of reality including their replication, stability, and transmission;[8] and non-verbal communication. These two areas of interest intersect in this dissertation and are represented by the twofold research question that was investigated in the field in Egypt.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In general, findings from this study will contribute to interdisciplinary fields of inquiry concerned with cognitive processes of the human mind. In particular, findings will contribute to the knowledge-base and understanding of the processes of cognitive conditioning, including the internalization, impact, and elucidation of the said conditioned cultural representations and how they hold the individual 'captive'. It further contributes by explicating a combination of factors that contribute to facilitating replication, relative stability, and continued transmission of those conditioned cultural representations. This has significant implication for benefiting diverse sectors of society that are working to address issues with respect to entrenched cultural representations - irrespective of how archaic or recent their genesis - that some individuals or groups of individuals are 'held by'.

The findings also display how change is occurring in an age-old cultural pattern and the relationship between the cultural behavior and issues of personal/economic development and education. The 'bird's eye view' of this particular cultural pattern, its cognitive shaping or manifestation, and its social and cultural shaping or manifestation, each contribute to the literature on the Modesty Code as it presents in Egypt.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the benefit of the reader, a glossary of Arabic and English terms has been included in the front pages of this thesis.

TRANSLITERATION

Concerning transliteration from Arabic to English, I followed a system based on the U.S. Library of Congress. Long and short vowels are not distinguished. The only diacritical marks that are used are the straight apostrophe (') which denotes the *'ayn* and the (,) comma which denotes the *hamzah*. Arabic words are italicized.

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[7] See Collins 1986.

[8] See Collins 1986.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Following is a brief format of subsequent chapters of this dissertation. Chapter One is a review of relevant literature. It discusses various conceptualizations of culture and educational paradigms which are in the process of reformulation and reconceptualization. In the process of this discussion, it states the conceptual and theoretical frames used for this study. This is then followed by a brief presentation and critique of the Modesty Code discourse. Chapter Two describes the research methodology and briefly describes the research sites. Chapter Three continues the methodological discussion, discussing and displaying the way that inductive procedures were used and discusses the use in analysis of and 'experience-near' terms as well as analytic terms that are not used by the indigenous population. Examples of this kind of analysis are presented.

I add a special note here to address the logic behind the ordering of the fourth and fifth chapters, prior to providing an overview of their material. It is necessary that the reader fully understand the nature of the Modesty Code schema (Chapter Four), before going to a discussion and explanation of its replication, maintenance and transmission. While most of the data in Chapter Five is used to speak to replication, maintenance, and transmission, Chapter Four relies on these same data to some degree, and the data have not been presented in both chapters.

Chapter Four addresses the research question 'what is the Modesty Code'? It begins with a basic descriptive profile of the Modesty Code phenomenon as a reference point for the reader. This leads into a discussion of the underlying cognitive matrix of the Modesty Code phenomenon. It moves from that description to interpretive and explanatory discussions that conceptualize the Modesty Code as a complex cognitive schema. Two cognitive schemas, patriarchal and *endo,* which perform major functions in, and underlie the Modesty Code schema, but together do not equal the Modesty Code schema, are expounded upon before moving to an elucidation of the Modesty Code schema itself.

The second half of this chapter describes selected cultural patterns that display the Modesty Code schema as it plays out in the daily lives of people. Various aspects of mate selection are addressed, from the traditional pattern of 'engagement then marriage' through the process of mate selection, and the decision-making criteria in both rural and urban populations. This is followed by a presentation of the Modesty Code schema's impact on the economic sector, then the educational sector, in Egypt to facilitate understanding of why, in the following section, the participants perceive marriage as 'the key' out of restrictive psycho-social circumstances and personal pain and the means to upward social mobility and economic security. Finally the cultural representation of virginity is addressed as a means to draw out further understanding of the Modesty Code complex schema.

Chapter Five is comprised of two sections. The first section discusses how respondents learn the Modesty Code schema - a set of mental and public representations interpretively clustered together that share a family resemblance among ideas and meaning, that explicitly involve the social and sexual interaction between males and females, in particular when transpiring outside the institution of marriage. It also discusses some details of the socialization process that results in the individual acquiring the cognitive schema of the Modesty Code. More precisely, it discusses the process of cognitive conditioning including the internalization of that conditioning that occurs during socialization. The second section addresses the relative stabilization of content in the generation of the Modesty Code representations. I have identified ten important factors operating in concert that have contributed to slowing the rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema, thus contributing to the relative stabilization of its representations. Points at which that stabilization is threatened become visible during the discussion. This is followed by an 'In-Closing' statement in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research questions noted in the introduction consisted of a) ascertaining what the Modesty Code is - as perceived and experienced in Egypt by various sectors of the population, and b) determining why the acceptance, adherence, and transmission of the Modesty Code schema has been so successful temporally and spatially. In other words, what are the determinants of the stability of the Modesty Code phenomenon? They also make reference to consideration of the interrelationship between education and the Modesty Code, and the latter's impact on individual, social, and economic development. Before addressing research methodology, it is critical to identify an appropriate conceptual framework that will make it possible to address these questions.

In discussing education Bullivant (1983:228) states, "One cannot address the transmission of data without addressing education," yet it is important to note that "culture ... is ... *central*[9] to the educational process". These two factors, then, demand culture as a starting point for this study. Notions of cognition and its relationship to culture provided me with the primary central frame.

CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN THE PROCESS OF RECONCEPTUALIZATION

There are many ways of modeling culture. The search here is for concepts that may provide us with an avenue into understanding the Modesty Code phenomenon and making a contribution to cognitive and cultural anthropology, education, and other fields in which are investigators or working with such phenomena. Thus, I began this search by turning to anthropological conceptualizations of culture.

It is not uncommon for many who seek a definition and understanding of the concept of culture to turn to Clifford Geertz. One aspect of Geertz' theory[10] on culture relate to a "set of ideas about how cultural processes work and what they do" (Ortner 2003). Geertz (1973:4-5) espouses the idea that the concept of culture is essentially a semiotic one. In support of Max Weber, he argues that "Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning". The approach Geertz uses is based on the metaphor of culture as text and anthropological inquiry as interpretation of texts.

Geertz argues that "Cultures are public systems of symbols and meanings, texts and practices that both represent a world and shape subjects in ways that fit the world as represented" (Ortner 2003). In other words, Geertz argues that rather then trying to discover what is in people's minds, anthropologists should be studying public representations, those things that can be seen and described in a culture. Geertz, (1973:91) whose approach to culture, initially called symbolic anthropology (Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, others) but which he later renamed 'interpretive anthropology', views the approach taken by cognitive anthropologists as a "mentalistic world of introspective psychology or, worse, speculative philosophy" where one would wander "forever in a haze of 'Cognitions,' 'Affectations,' 'Connotations' and other elusive entities". Thus he limited cultural models to perceptible embodiments - external physical structures - and excluded internal, mental constructions" (D' Andrade 1995:157).

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[9] Italics are the researcher's, inserted for emphasis.

[10] Ortner (2003) identifies Geertz' theory of culture as comprising two main aspects.

Neither Geertz, nor the interpretive anthropological approach was helpful to elucidate the Modesty Code phenomenon that clearly involves both perceptible and nonperceptible embodiments that are internalized, replicated, and maintained, and which continue to be transmitted both through space and time. Bearing in mind that my search was for concepts or theoretical frames that may provide an avenue into further understanding the Modesty Code phenomenon, I turned to and drew on cognitive anthropology for other concepts and approaches.

In contrast to Geertz' interpretive anthropology, D' Andrade's (1995) historical and substantive text which he locates solidly within cognitive anthropology, provides considerable discussion and analysis centering on how culture and mental imagery relate to one another. To develop this argument it is schema theory that he turns to most extensively (D'Andrade 1995:122-149). The term schemata is an abstraction referring to cognitive structures that serve as the basis for all human processing of information, for example, "perception and comprehension, categorization and planning, recognition and recall, problem-solving and decision-making" (Rumelhart 1980 cited in Casson 1983:430). Neisser 1976:56 (cited in Casson, 1983) states this quite succinctly: a "schema is not only the plan it's the executor of the plan. It's a pattern *of* action as well as a pattern *for* action". To assist the readers' understanding of my usage of the term schema, I present D' Andrade's (1995:142), summation of schema taken from his earlier text (1992:29):

> To say that something is a "schema" is a shorthand way of saying that a distinct and strongly interconnected pattern of interpretive elements can be activated by minimal inputs. A schema is an interpretation which is frequent, well organized, memorable, which can be made from minimal cues, contains one or more prototypic instantiations, is resistant to change, etc. While it would be more accurate to speak always of *interpretations with such and such a degree of schematicity*, the convention of calling highly schematic interpretations "schemas" remains in effect in the cognitive literature.

D' Andrade (1995) refines the notion of schema by introducing connectionist theory[11] observing that the connectionist model has modified the original notion of schema

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[11] See D' Andrade 1995:139-143 for a discussion of schema theory and connectionist models.

(as cognitive processes that were serial in nature). A connectionist network can recognize patterns, can fill in missing elements in a pattern, can identify underlying structures of stimuli, can blend interpretations into a reasonable synthesis, and be sensitive to context. He notes later that "Psychologists who had been working in cognition found that connectionist networks were excellent models for how the processes of schematization might work in the brain" (D'Andrade 1995:139).

Schemas are not fixed immutable cognitive structures; rather they are, according to Norman (1986:536) cited in D'Andrade (1995:142), "flexible configurations", "flexible interpretive states". In contrast, drawing on Hutchins (1991) and continuing to develop the notion of schema, D'Andrade (1995:142) points out that "One can create [connectivist] networks which form preemptive and coercive schemas, just as one can create networks which form flexible and accommodating schemas". The preemptive and rigidity features that some connectivist networks (schemas) can have is significant to note when examining the Modesty Code schema. Clearly, then, the difference between "schema and non schema is a matter of degree not an all-or-none-affair" (D'Andrade 1995:142).

Schemata are however not conceptualized as simply cognitive structures. Rather each one is a schema 'of something', of phenomena in the social or natural world external to the mind. Shore (1996), for example, suggests a perspective for thinking about culture that parallels his own approach for understanding the mind, namely, as an extensive and "heterogeneous collection of models". He argues that the construction of meanings is at the core of the human condition, and that they are "twice born", i.e., "products of individual cognition and human cultures". He proceeds to operationalize the concept of culture as an extensive and heterogeneous collection of 'models', models that exist both as public artifacts in the world and as cognitive constructs 'in the mind' of members of a community (Shore 1996:44). "Culture is (best conceived as a) ...collection of models or what psychologists sometimes call schemas" (Shore 1996:44).

Referring to this and using the terms "model" and "cognitive analogue", Shore (1996:52) points out that:

> ... there is not a simple one-to-one correspondence between a social model and its cognitive analogue. It is conceivable, for example, that under certain conditions, members of a community will fail to fully internalize a cultural model because their personal experiences are incompatible with the conventional model. For these people the cultural models have become "dead models". These individuals may well have alternative mental models that may be highly idiosyncratic or socially manifested as marginal cultural representations or as cultural innovations.

Preferring the term representation rather than schema or model, Sperber (1996a:49) observes that what we call 'cultural' are representations that are widespread and enduring. That in fact, culture is composed of two kinds of such cultural representations: internal (mental) comprised of "beliefs, intentions, and preferences"; and external (public) composed of "signals, utterances, texts, and pictures" (Sperber 1996a:24). Thus Sperber recognizes culture as including those things that Geertz considered central to its study and definition, but gives equal weight to study of their 'internal' or mental counterparts, what Shore calls 'cognitive analogues'.

A representation (mental or cultural) may be of a single cultural item, or may be complex, including a multitude of cultural items. Writing of something similar in his analysis of ordinary language, Wittgenstein (1953, 1:66-71), cited in Lakoff (1987:16), was the first to demonstrate that in a category like game, "there are no common properties shared by all games". That in fact, "the category of games is united by what Wittgenstein called (descriptive) family resemblances" (Lakoff 1987:16). Just as "there need be no single collection of properties shared by everyone in a single family" and where "members of a family resemble one another" in "a wide variety of ways", so too are "games, in this respect, ... like families".

Sperber applies this notion to mental and public representations, and speaks of a descriptive family resemblance, but also an interpretive one. Thus for Sperber an ethnographic unit of analysis such as 'marriage' may share few, if any, descriptive characteristics from one culture to another; it shares only in being interpreted as marriage in the ethnographic literature. Like Wittgenstein's category of game, comparative study of cultural institutions is a study of those behaviours that are interpreted as the same institution, but that may resemble each other more in an interpretive way than a descriptive one.

I used connectionist schema theory conjoined with, yet modified from, the notion of 'descriptive family resemblance' (Wittgenstein 1953 cited in Lakoff 1987:16) to an 'interpretive family resemblance' (Sperber 1996a) because it spoke to the interconnected network of the interpretive family resemblance in the ideas and meanings among the cultural representations that comprise the Modesty Code schema. Further, connectionist schema theory (D'Andrade 1995) offers, as Casson (1983) earlier points out, a "broad, unified theoretical framework that has the potential to integrate research in cognitive anthropology and cognitive science generally". One might add that, as theories of learning are integral to much educational research, connectionist schema theory could provide a wider integration of research, providing insights and explanations for learning.

In addition to connectionist schema theory as a frame for this study, I also drew from Game Theory. Many scholars have recognized the value of Game Theory as a theoretical framework and as an insightful lens for understanding cultural phenomena. Geertz (1983:23) used the theoretical frame of "serious games" in his work 'Blurred Genres" and in his classic essay, "Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight" (1973).

Ortner, (1996:215) who was a student of Geertz', also takes a semiotic view of culture. Ortner (1996) indirectly alluding to her own thought about the concept of schema, refers to her usage of a similar notion that she termed "cultural schemas" in 'High Religion' (1989:126-129) wherein she discusses the "variability of ways in which actors may hold, or be held by, such schemas". Ortner (1996:12-13), in proposing a model of practice and searching for a term to convey the "most comprehensive theoretical category" that "embodies agency but does not begin with, or pivot upon, the agent, actor, or individual", selects the term "serious games". Ortner (1996:12-13) elaborates on the idea of 'game':

> The idea of "game" is meant to capture simultaneously the following dimensions: that social life is culturally organized and constructed, in terms of defining categories of actors, rules and goals of the games, and so forth; that social life is precisely social, consisting of webs of relationship and interaction between multiple, shiftingly interrelated subject positions, none of which can be extracted as autonomous "agents"; and yet at the same time there is "agency", that is, actors play with skill, intention, wit, knowledge and intelligence. The idea that the game is "serious" is meant to add into the equation the idea that power and inequality pervade the games of life in multiple ways, and that, while there may be playfulness and pleasure in the process, the stakes of these games are often very high. It follows in turn that that the games of life must be played with intensity and sometimes deadly earnestness. As a final note there is an assumption that there is never only one game.

Ortner (1996:12) is not however addressing the term 'game' to relationships between cognitive structures or processes and external cultural phenomena, but to her concern for both recognizing individual agency in social behaviour and the embedded nature of agency in a cultural pattern or "motivated, organized, and socially complex ways of going about life in particular times and places". My usage of the concept of game is not unlike Ortner's (1989) "cultural schemas" or (1996) "serious games', pointing to the "variability of ways in which actors may hold, or be held by", the Modesty Code schema as a "serious game".

EXPLAINING THE REPLICATION, MAINTENANCE AND DISSEMINATION OF A PARTICULAR CULTURAL SCHEMA

The research questions imply not only the need to be able to speak to the presence of specific cognitive and cultural phenomena (using concepts such as schema, cultural models, and serious games) but also to speak to how these phenomena are replicated, maintained, and disseminated within human communities. This led me to examine evolutionary models of cultural change.

Dawkins (1976; 1982) and others advocate a Darwinian model of selection for cultural evolution. Evolution by selection has been used to understand continuous cultural behavioral changes since the early 1970's. Sperber[12] states that there are three assumptions underlying models of cultural evolution:

1) culture is made up of specific units (such as Dawkin's memes).

2) these units replicate themselves with occasional variations.

3) some process of selection among these variations is the main force driving cultural evolution.

Sperber (1996a:8), challenges these underlying assumptions of the selectionist models of cultural evolution, as maintained by Dawkins (1976) and others. He argues that the "Darwinian approaches (to cultural change), which borrow their models from population genetics, grant only a limited role to psychology. Yet the micro-mechanisms that bring about the propagation of ideas are mostly psychological and, more specifically, cognitive mechanisms" (Sperber 1996a:3). For this reason, he advocates an approach that is both epidemiological and cognitive, an epidemiology model of "cultural attraction", where "a greater role is given to psychological mechanisms" than selectionist models allot.

Sperber (1996a:49) states that what we call 'cultural' are representations that are widespread and enduring. That in fact, culture is composed of two kinds of widespread and enduring cultural representations: internal (mental) comprised of "beliefs, intentions, and preferences"; and external (public) composed of "signals, utterances, texts, and pictures" (Sperber 1996a:24). Representations disseminate through communication or imitation and can be transmitted vertically, slowly, from generation to generation such as occurs with traditions and religions, and are "comparable to endemics" or, horizontally, spreading "rapidly throughout a whole population but (having) a short lifespan", such as "fashions", and are "comparable to epidemics" (Sperber 1996a:58). To Sperber (1996a) representations are the "relevant units in the study of cultural evolution".

Sperber (1996a:101) essentially argues two points: first, that representations do not replicate during the transmission process, rather, they transform; secondly, that their transformation is the "result of a constructive cognitive process". What Sperber (1996a:101) is stating here is that replication may be understood as a "case of zero transformation. However, from his perspective, replication need not be perfect, need not involve zero transformation. Dawkins (1982:85) himself makes this point: "no copying process is infallible" and "'it is no part of the definition of a replicator that its copies must all be perfect'". Thus, an epidemiology of representations is the study of transformation and transmission of representations (Sperber 1996a:58).

Sperber's (1996a:111-112) epidemiological model of "cultural attraction", then, is an evolutionary model of cultural change that is an alternative to the selectionist model.

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[12] The three underlying assumptions of evolutionary culture are taken verbatim from Sperber's (1996b) presentation of an overview of his work in 'Explaining Culture' at the Centre Nationale Recherche Scientifique in Paris, France.

Following is a brief explication of the epidemiology model of 'cultural attraction' by Sperber (1996a:111-112):

> ... an attractor ... is an abstract, statistical construct, like a mutation rate or a transformation probability. To say that there is an attractor is just to say that, in a given space of possibilities, transformation probabilities form a certain pattern: they tend to be biased so as to favour transformations in the direction of some specific point, and therefore cluster at and around that point. ... To say that there is an attractor ... is to put in a certain light what is to be causally explained: namely, a distribution of items and its evolution....

In other words, when representations transform, there is the probability that they will tend to gravitate towards the direction of a specific point and cluster at that point. Sperber (1996a:13) adds that both psychological and ecological factors explain the existence of attractors. "The main force driving cultural evolution is the selective stabilization brought about by these attractors" (Sperber 1996b).

To clarify what is going on in an epidemiology of representations model then, "the objects of an epidemiology of representations are neither abstract representations nor individual concrete representations" but rather, "strains, or families, of concrete representations related both by causal relationships and by similarity of content". Thus, you can have a "strain of representations similar enough in content to be seen as versions of one another" (Sperber 1996a:100). Sperber (1996a:100-101) explains further:

> ... all the concrete representations ... can be identified by means of a prototypical version, as having the same content, with only negligible versions, thus as imperfect replicas of one another but replicas nonetheless. Once this is done, it is but a step to seeing all tokens of the 'same' representation as forming a distinct class of objects in the world, just as zebras are commonly seen as forming a natural kind. Granting such unity to strains of representations makes it possible to use, in order to develop a causal explanation of culture, one of intellectual history's most powerful tools: the Darwinian idea of selection. On this approach, cultural representations are self-replicating representations. They replicate by causing those who hold them to produce public behaviors that cause others to hold them too. Occasionally representations 'mutate', possibly starting a new strain. The task of explaining the contents and evolution of a given culture can be seen, then, as one of finding out which representations are most successful at replicating, under what conditions, and why.

Sperber (1996a:101) states he is not alone in this observation, as "versions of this idea have been defended by, among others, Karl Popper, Donald Campbell, Jacques Monod, Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman, Boyd and Richerson, William Durham, and by Richard Dawkins who coined the name 'memes' for cultural replicators".

Sperber's (1996a) epidemiological and cognitive approach was determined to be an appropriate model from which to examine the "relative stabilization of form or content in the generation" of the Modesty Code representations and productions. The transformational probability of the Modesty Code schema formed a certain pattern: they were biased and tended to cluster at and around a central core point.

As one can see from the above brief renderings of some of the various conceptualizations of culture and cultural evolution by some prominent anthropologists, the concept of culture is in the midst of paradigmatic shifting sands. Not only are there a myriad of possible conceptual frameworks for culture; the concept of culture itself is in the process of reformulation and reconceptualization (Shore 1996; Sperber 1996a, 1996b and others).

Culture is not alone in these changing conceptual pools. It should be no surprise to discover that education too, has reached a crisis state conceptually (Toh and Floresca-Cawagas 1995; Aviram 1996). The dominant theory of education and its place in society until the 1980s, and in particular of education and personal, social, and economic development, has been labeled 'the modernization paradigm'. The essence of this theory was that increased levels of formal education would increase wealth or economic development in societies, and eliminate poverty. As early as 1976, Eliou observed that education "did not prove to be the social equalizer it was conceived to be by the modernists but a means of widening the gulf". Years later, Aviram (1996:423) argues that there is:

> a deep crisis caused by the gap between the system and the changing world that surrounds it. Educational institutions are dysfunctional because they remain wedded to outmoded parameters in their aims, activities, structures, methods and perceptions of their clientele.

Aviram (1996:423) further observes, that although the search for a new educational paradigm is only at the incipient stage:

> ... when fundamental structures shift, and especially when they shift abruptly, people tend to explain the signs of the emerging structures in terminology pertaining to the old structures and to behave accordingly.

Aviram(1996:435-436) states what is needed is a "cognitive leap". There is an increasing body of scholars who continue to challenge the view that education (as currently conceptualized and practiced) is a key agent of societal development; yet many still do not heed Aviram's above observation in their analysis. Nevertheless, a growing number of educators criticize the modernization paradigm, proposing critical transformation as an alternative paradigm. The key component of this paradigm is that changes at the global level will have to be accompanied at all levels by an authentic transformation (Toh 1987). Educational theorists and practioners working from this perspective have often looked to the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, for guidance and there is now a large literature presenting many alternatives.

Although ethnography was the overarching structure for the study, multiple theoretical frameworks were used: schema theory as a connectionist network; game theory ("serious games", cultural schemas); and an epidemiological model of "cultural attraction". Schema theory as a connectionist network, in conjunction with the theoretical construct of game, ("serious games"; cultural schemas); and an epidemiological model of "cultural attraction". Schema theory as a connectionist network, in conjunction with the theoretical construct of game, [serious game] wee found to be effective models through which to examine and explicate the Modesty Code representations that individuals 'may hold, or be held by'.

THE MODESTY CODE DISCOURSE

The Modesty Code is a wide-ranging and virile[13] 'complex' documented by many scholars[14]. It is found in a broad range of both contemporary and historical societies, some of which are geographically contiguous: "the circum-Mediterranean area, across the Middle East and South-West Asia, across India, and up into China" although others are not, for example those in Latin America (Ortner 1996:51). Moreover, some version of this 'schema' has been demonstrated among "agriculturalists", "pastoralists", "peasants", and "elites"; thus it is not restricted to any specific stratum of society (Ortner 1996:43-44). In conjunction with this expansive demographic picture, the Modesty Code complex has also demonstrated considerable time depth.

Anthropological discourse on the Modesty Code is subsumed under the broad framework of a Mediterranean culture-area construct, known as "Mediterranean distinctiveness" (Gilmore 1982; 1987; Davis 1977; Pitt-Rivers 1977). Under this broad rubric, studies have addressed diversified components of the Modesty Code schema: the value systems of purity/honor/shame; *purdah* (veiling, female seclusion, and sex segregation in private/public domain frameworks - both conceptual and spatial); protection and control of the female's social and sexual sphere; female circumcision; polygamy; child and arranged marriages; honor murder; and so on. Sexuality has been central to a number of these different discourses, particularly, the wide-ranging theme of 'control of female sexuality'.

Several anthropological interpretive frameworks - psychoanalytic, structural, functional, ecological, political, or some combination thereof - have been used to interpret the Modesty Code phenomenon. Yet, as Ortner (1996:46) argues, excluding the psychoanalytic argument, these explanations all share common failings: they are "static functional accounts" which lack time depth; they treat the unit under study as "closed, exclusive, and isolated from a larger social context - the family, lineage, or caste is treated as a society in itself"; and lastly, excluding the psychoanalytic argument, all explanations situate the problem as one of "male/male relations" in which females are "intermediaries".

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[13] Virile in this context implies strong, powerful.

[14] Abou-Zeid 1966; Abu-Lughod 1985a; 1985b; 1986; 1987; 1993; Abu-Odeh 1996; Abu Saud 1984; Abu-Zahra 1970; Al-Khayat 1990; Antoun 1968; Brooks 1994; Campbell; 1974; Collins, J. 1996; 1997; 1998; Davis, J. 1977; Davis, S. 1983; Delaney 1987; Dodd 1973; Gilmore 1982; 1987 Granqvist 1931; 1935; Haeri 1994; Jacobson 1970; Kressel 1986; 1991-1992; Levy 1965; Maklouf 1979; Mandelbaum 1993; Mason 1975; Najjar 1992; Ortner 1996; Papanek 1973; 1982; Patai 1969; 1983; Peristiany 1966; Pitt-Rivers 1965; 1977; Robertson-Smith 1903; Rugh 1986; Schneider 1971; Wikan 1984, and others.

Ortner goes on to discuss at length the difficulties of various explanations proffered in this literature, particularly in her essay titled "The Virgin and the State". She then points to what she sees as an underlying problem with the literature, a problem in which researchers tend to take the account of the local or 'native' population's explanations as factual, providing the answers to their research questions:

> One of the problems with the purity literature, I think, has been a failure to get beneath native ideology; the natives justify female purity in terms of maintaining the group's actual status, as a holding action for that status in the system, when in fact it is oriented toward an ideal and generally unattainable status(1996:56-57).

She concludes that, to date, no framework has been provided "for encompassing and accounting for the phenomenon as a whole in cross-cultural, cross-class, and cross-sex perspective" (Ortner 1996:47).

An extensive literature speaks to the Modesty Code phenomenon without naming it, by subsuming discussion of components of it under a gloss term, by conceptualizing the Modesty Code as consisting of one to three components, or by extracting a strand or several strands and then failing to reconnect them for analytical purpose.

For example, Davison and Kanuka's 1992 study on education of girls in Malawi, sub-Saharan Africa, reported that Nagat El Sanabary's use of the term "*culture of domesticity*" for a recurring phenomenon of behavioral norms and expectations in the Middle East and North Africa, also applies to sub-Saharan Africa in general, pointing to a wider cultural distribution than implied by the original author(455). Preston (1984), discussing gender in Latin America, mentions only in passing the 'machismo' complex and the role that some of its components play in gender inequality, apparently unaware that an extensive literature on the modesty code speaks to a very similar complex.[15]

A wide range of terms in the literature is used to conceptualize the Modesty Code as consisting of, typically, one to three components. For example, the Modesty Code has been reduced to the institution of seclusion (Fernea and Fernea 1985/1986; Lindholm and Lindholm 1982; and others). Abu-Lughod (1986:41) reduces it to a morality code consisting of two separate and distinct codes: honor and modesty. Ortner[16] (1996:44) refers to the Modesty Code as "control of female sexual purity", or a "proscribed behavioral code"; Maklouf (1979:38) states, "the Modesty Code rests on two contradictory assumptions: that the woman is weak and needs to be protected from threats to her honor, and that she has strong sexual impulses which threaten the honor of the male and the integration of the group". Melman (1995) refers to the cluster as the "harem system" consisting of "polygamy, concubinage and various forms of segregation". And last but not least, it has been reduced to *purdah*[17]. In fact, Mandelbaum (1993:2) states, aptly so, that *purdah* ("curtain" in Hindi and Urdu) is the most ubiquitous term under which the Modesty Code customs are subsumed. *Purdah* has been used in both a limited sense to designate "physical covering and spatial enclosure" or in a broader sense to indicate "much more" (Mandelbaum 1993:2).

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[15] The 'machismo complex', a widespread phenomenon in Latin America, shares many components with the Modesty Code schema.

[16] Ortner (1996) has made efforts to examine the Modesty Code schema as a whole, so it is surprising to see her reduce the complex by referring to it in such terms.

Scholars writing within the Modesty Code discourse have also demonstrated a tendency to extract a strand or several strands, (for analysis purposes) and then failing to reconnect the thread(s) back into the Modesty Code schema from which it was removed. For example, components such as veiling, female circumcision, hymen reconstruction, and honor murder, are each a complex subject matter on its own and each component should be examined individually, and in depth, initially. To achieve an understanding of the schema, there is a disaggregation of the schema to explain the parts (cultural representations) and reveal their roles in it. However, recognizing the components to be a part of a much larger whole, (since, in reality none of these components operate independently of others), in the next step of analysis the components should be returned to the overarching schema. Then, an explanation is sought for that larger whole (schema). However, the problem here is that in too many cases discourse fails to recognize that the phenomenon under discussion is actually part of a much larger cognitive-cultural complex, the Modesty Code schema. This results in a discussion of each component as if it were an island unto itself.

For example, El Guindi (1999:3-4) says it is "analytically unproductive to connect the several institutions of *veil-harem-eunuchs-seclusion-polygamy,* because each element may have had its own history, role in society, and cultural meaning". Moreover, she claims that "grouping the veil with other institutions confines the study to veiling by women" - although she does not elaborate on how she arrives at this reasoning. She states, with reference to the Modesty Code:

> I contend that the modesty-based code (modesty-shame-seclusion) represents an ethnocentric imposition on Arabo-Islamic culture. Clustering these notions obscures the nuanced difference that is characteristic of Arabo-Islamic culture. The modesty-honour gendered opposition is equally inappropriate (El Guindi 2000).[18]

There is also a discourse that frequently references the Modesty Code or one or other of its components, but does so for purposes of addressing women's political position, taking a value stance directed towards changing that position. In these cases components of the Modesty Code have been subsumed under terms such as: *'status of women'* and *'position of women'*; in Education, as *'culture of domesticity'* in Development Studies or

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[17] The most commonly used terms in the literature to define and describe *purdah* are veiling and seclusion of females, another reductive interpretation.

[18] In fact, these behaviors and institutions may be seen as versions of a 'strain' or 'family' of concrete representations related both by causal relationships and by similarity of content" (Sperber 1996a:83).

Education and Development, under WID, WAD, GAD, *GED*[19]; and under *human rights* arguments. Such glosses in themselves can be broad, narrow, or vague in their definitions and are not likely to contribute to a fuller cognitive and cultural understanding of the phenomenon. Slipping female genital modification or female circumcision or honor murder under glosses of *'women's position'*, *'women's status'*, or *'human rights violation'* discourse, does little, if anything, to inform one about the complex cognitive and cultural components actually operating here. It no doubt has its place in political dialogue, but it may transmit both disinformation and misinformation that can be disadvantageous to policy and decision-makers who need informed analysis to undergird their decisions to develop adequate policy frameworks.

Besides this structural and content reductionism, motive or underlying assumption has also been commonly reduced to male control over female sexuality, both cognitively and behaviorally. Overall in the Modesty Code and related literature, discourse on the impact that the Modesty Code phenomenon has on males, their thoughts, feelings, motives, attitudes, values and decision-making; on how they are also 'caught up in', or 'held by' the Modesty Code schema, is simply absent. Typically, at most, there is a stereotyped glossing of males, categorizing them as patriarchal and oppressive to females and hence perpetuating the draconian aspects of the Modesty Code schema. A balanced sex methodology and analysis is paramount for elucidating the complexities of the Modesty Code gestalt, and I try to bring such an approach to this research.

Despite the acknowledgement of the Modesty Code as a recurring complex phenomenon, with assimilation, replication, and transmission occurring over wide spatial and temporal culture-environmentally contiguous areas that have further extended beyond this region given the global world we now live in, only a few scholars (e.g. Antoun 1968; Engels 1996; Mandelbaum 1993; Yalman 1963; Ortner 1996) have attempted to examine the Modesty Code as a 'complex-whole' itself. The Modesty Code configuration is multifaceted, yet its complexity has generally been either unrecognized, unacknowledged, oversimplified, or flat-lined.

CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FEMALE

In the Modesty Code schema there are a number of different cultural representations of the female interlinked together. Unraveling these different cultural representations, one can identify two basic clusters. In the first, associated with a patriarchal notion of female inferiority are the perceptions that the female is weak, naïve, and lacking the power of discretion and resistance. Consequently, she is perceived as incapable of making sound judgments and of being easily persuaded and manipulated. Such vulnerabilities are believed to leave her either incapable of resisting her own desires or susceptible to being overpowered by a male's sexual advances, which are conceived of as strong and impetuous. Thus she should not be in a position where she is unprotected.

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[19] WID (Women In Development); WAD (Women and Development); GAD (Gender and Development); GED (Gender, Environment and Development) are a succession of paradigms or frameworks that developed during the women's movement for promoting greater equity and participation of women and awareness of the environment in development studies and practise.

Co-existing with the above cultural representations, there is a widespread cluster of representations of female erotic power. Patai (1983:126) observes that [Arab] men have a "wholly erotic attitude toward them" [females] and that the female is "an erotic object to be pursued". This erotic power is often associated with the concept of *fitnah*.

Fitnah, is a complex concept that has a plurality of meanings that converge and overlap. The commonly used translation of *fitnah* is chaos. Kamali (1993) states however, that *fitnah* can be classified into two main types: firstly, those which concern 'doubt' *fitnat al shubahat*; and secondly, those relating to 'sensuality', *finat al shawat*. Mernissi (1987:31) contends that *fitnah* also "means a beautiful woman - the connotation of a *femme fatale* who makes men lose their self-control". In the context of describing other writer's theory about female sexuality, she goes on to indicate her connection of this meaning of *fitnah* to the more accepted meaning of chaos:

> The Muslim[20] woman is endowed with a fatal attraction which erodes the male's will to resist her and reduces him to a passive acquiescent role. He has no choice; he can only give in to her attraction, whence her identification with *fitna*, chaos, and with the anti-divine anti-social forces of the universe (Mernissi 1987:41).

van Nieuwkerk (1996:184) based on her fieldwork conducted in Egypt, observes that the "women's ability to provoke *fitna* is ... mainly invested in their bodies and in the nature of their sexuality" (van Nieuwkerk (1996:149):

> Whatever women do, they are first and foremost perceived as sexual bodies. They and their bodies seem to have only one dimension. ... women, in contrast, [to men] even if they do not move or dance but simply walk or work in the male space, are perceived as sexual beings (Van Nieuwkerk 1996:184).

Mernissi (1987:32), argues that Islamic society is characterized by a "double theory of sexual dynamics", an "explicit" and an "implicit" theory of female sexuality. Mernissi (1987:32) sees the explicit theory as comprising an "antagonistic, machismo vision of the relations between the sexes", that it is the "prevailing contemporary belief that men are aggressive in their interaction with women, and women are passive". Here the male is the hunter and female is his prey (Mernissi 1987:33). It is this theory that Mernissi believes is deeply ingrained in both (Muslim) males and females visions of themselves. In contrast, in the implicit[21] theory of female sexuality the female is the "hunter" and the male is the "passive victim" (Mernissi 1987:33).

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[20] In Egypt, I observed that "the female" - not just "Muslim females", as Mernissi (1987) claims, does not have to "do" anything to rouse or entice male sexual attraction. In other words, simply "being female" may incite sexual desire in the male.

Mernissi (1987:33) further notes that in both these theories the female possesses a "power" "*qaid*",[22] "the power to deceive and defeat men, not by force, but by cunning and intrigue". She then goes on to state that the female's power of *qaid* is the one component that the two theories of sexual dynamics share in common (Mernissi 1987:33). From there she argues that this perceived "cunning" power of women can be seen as a single underlying explanation of Muslim social organization:

> The whole Muslim organization of social interaction and spatial configuration can be understood in terms of women's *qaid* power. The social order then appears as an attempt to subjugate her power and neutralize its disruptive effects.

In both the Modesty Code literature (Lindholm/Lindholm 1982; Mernissi 1987; Delaney 1987; van Nieuwkerk 1996), as well as Islamic religious discourse,[23] cultural representations of female sexual aggressiveness, seductiveness, and cunning are used to symbolize *fitnah*, (chaos). Here, the female, through her ability to incite male sexual attraction and desire, in conjunction with *qaid* of the female, generates a disruptive and distracting influence over the male that enables her to effectively overpower him, tempting males from *halal* behavior, resulting in *fitnah*, chaos; thus transmitting the message that the female is a danger to social stability.

I would like to add a final note here on this section of cultural representations of the female. It has been argued that female sexuality in the Middle East and various parts of Africa is perceived as being "inherently insatiable" (Patai 1983; Fernea and Fernea 1985/1986; Lindholm and Lindholm 1982; Mernissi 1987) or "voracious" (Lightfoot-Klein 1987 and others) and thus needs to be restrained. Moreover, that this conceptualization of female nature has accelerated into a 'promiscuity phobia' (Lindholm and Lindholm 1982; Fernea and Fernea 1985/1986; Lightfoot-Klein 1989; and others). Lindholm and Lindholm (1982) and Delaney (1987) also state that rather than some 'inherently insatiable' quality it would be more accurate to say that the female lacks the power of discretion and resistance.

These cultural representations have two clusters then, those referring to the female's lack of power of discretion and resistance and those which pertain to the female as having an unappeasable sexual nature, that are derivative from the cluster of cultural representations of female power and of the female as an erotic sexual being. Hence, in the literature, both Islamic religious discourse and the Modesty Code discourse have drawn from the 'second cluster of cultural representations of the female as erotic power and presumed innate slyness', linking and reducing this to the cause of *fitnah*, specifically the sensual aspect of *fitnah*.

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[21] Mernissi (1987:32) says the implicit theory of female sexuality is epitomized by Imam Ghazali's (1050-1111) classic interpretation of the Koran, *The Revivification of Religious Sciences*.

[22] In my judgment, Mernissi (1987) has incorrectly transliterated the word *qaid* and it appears that van Nieuwkerk (1996) simply used Mernissi's transliteration and meaning. The meaning of *qaid* is "handcuffed". The proper transliteration should be *kaid* (prounounced *kayd*) which means 'cunning'. I argue that *kaid*, is, in fact, a strategy of sly deception and manipulation.

[23] See Barbara Freyer Stowasser's (1994) discussion on this.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a "way of thinking about and studying social reality" (Strauss and Corbin 1998:3). Van Maanen (1995:98) says it is a "matter of strategy". It is possible to distinguish between methodology and method although the two terms are often conflated. Using the above definition, methodology is an overall orientation to research grounded in a particular epistemology or theory of knowledge. Methods are those specific data-gathering and analysis procedures that are used within the overall research orientation.

ETHNOGRAPHY

The overarching methodology for this study was ethnography. Ethnographers endeavor to "acquire a sense of how a multitude of discrete behaviors fit together in some integrated way" (Wolcott 1995:85). Or as Wolcott (1995:86) citing Frake (1964) indicates, the point of ethnography "is not to recount events, as such, but to render a theory of cultural behavior".

As both a process and product (Agar 1980), ethnography has numerous strengths and the following points represent the rationale for choosing it. It is multi-methodological (in the sense that it opens up a wide variety of methods for gathering data), and inherently cross-cultural and comparative; it uses a range of flexible strategies depending on the context at hand; it entails deep immersion accomplished over an extended period of time. This last point is important not only for any cross-cultural research but because it facilitates the development of a trusting and at-ease relationship between participants of the study and the researcher. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, 'deep immersion' enabled the researcher to investigate and secure in-depth knowledge, insight, and understanding of the dynamics involved in the Modesty Code schema and the process of its replication and transmission.

Raybeck (1996) notes specifically with respect to ethnographic research in the field, that it bounds with the unforeseen. This fact cannot be overstated. Realistically speaking, then, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1996:24) point out, "certainly, we must recognize that, even less than other forms of social research, the course of ethnography cannot be predetermined". Research strategies that acknowledge the role that the 'unexpected' can and does play, and contain the leverage for both - the researcher to express agility, and for the strategies to exhibit the resiliency necessary to be able to expand or diverge according to the context under study - provide a pragmatic advantage over more restrictive perspectives and approaches. Thus, research in Egypt was shaped not only by the research questions but according to the access possible to particular sites and individuals, and the data that could be generated from those sites.

Ethnography is often treated as one of many "qualitative" research methodologies, although in fact ethnography per se does not always exclude the use of statistical procedures. This study, however, relies on a qualitative research orientation that emphasizes research strategies that draw largely on interpretive and critical approaches to social sciences. The goal of qualitative research is to clarify how people develop their conceptualization and interpretation of reality (Filstead 1979). Qualitative methodology enables one to capture aspects of the social world and reveal deep structures of social relations. How qualitative research proceeds to do this is not 'etched in stone'. As Coffey (1996:5) citing Strauss (1987:7) argues:

> qualitative researchers have quite different investigatory styles, let alone different talents and gifts, so that a standardization of methods... would only constrain and even stifle social researchers' best efforts.

Coffey (1996:5) adds that:

> the diversity of social settings and attendant contingencies also have an impact on the collection of qualitative research data, as does the aim of the research.

Accordingly the methodological approaches and strategies that I used for this study are best articulated by Becker (1989), cited in Denzin and Lincoln (1998:3):

> The qualitative researcher-as-*bricoleur* uses the tools of his or her methodological trade, employing whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand (Becker 1989). If new tools have to be invented, or pieced together, then the researcher will do this. The choice of what tool to use, which research practices to employ, is not set in advance. The "choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context" (Nelson et al, 1992:2), what is available in the context, and what the researcher can do in that setting.

There is a challenge in trying to describe one's research methods both in terms of ethnography and qualitative research, for the two approaches have different histories and often use different terminologies. In particular, the prototype for ethnographic research is the community study, in which the ethnographer enters a community to learn the 'culture' (or some aspect of the culture) of the people. It is intrinsically an interpretive task, with every tool available contributing to the researcher being able to set aside the taken for granted world of her own culture, and learn the nature of the unfamiliar culture she has entered.

In contrast, the underlying prototype for qualitative research is quantitative research, and the terminology used reflects that orientation. Thus qualitative research speaks of data-gathering, of sampling, and of analysis of data. However, qualitative research, like ethnographic research, is a process used in the search for understanding of other people's world-views, or 'taken for granted sense' of their social reality. Consequently, the tools of qualitative research are appropriate for ethnographic research.

Thus in the following, as I lay out my research approach, I will draw on the two traditions and describe how each has informed this research. The research work formed a coherent whole for me, as the researcher, so the task here is to describe that for the reader, to the best of my ability. And it will be immediately evident that the two traditions are being drawn on, for ethnography would demand that a major focus would be on an ethnographic profile of the research site, of the community or culture which is being researched, whereas qualitative researchers would move quickly to issues of data collection. The compromise here will be to present a brief description of the research site to present enough information that the reader can minimally visualize the context. Note that much of this could be introduced under the rubric of 'sampling', for the country and local sites were selected from a potentially very large set (or population) of geographic units, any of which could have been drawn to address the research questions. As noted earlier, for this study, Egypt was the country of choice.

THE RESEARCH SITE

EGYPT DEMOGRAPHICS

Egypt, located in the northeast corner of Africa, lies south of the Mediterranean Sea and borders the countries of Libya to the west, Sudan to the south, and in part the Gaza Strip and Israel to the east, while the rest of the east is shared with the Red Sea. Most of Egypt's land mass consists of two desert areas: the Western Desert (also known as the Libyan Desert) and the Eastern Desert bordering the Red Sea. Egypt is divided into Lower Egypt, the delta area where the Nile empties into the Mediterranean, and Upper Egypt, the valley south of Cairo. The majority of Egypt's inhabitants have always lived in the Nile valley and the Delta and its population has "increased from just under 10 million in 1897 to just over 30 million in 1966 and to almost 60 million in 1996", with "future projections" pointing towards "100 million in about 2025" (Bishay [1992] cited in Cole and Altorki 1998:18). Demographics of Egypt today indicate a population of 74,718,797 (CIA, 2003)[24] with Cairo's metropolitan area comprising 15,892,400 and the city proper 7,937,700 people. The rest of Egypt is sparsely populated.

Egypt's location has provided a homeland base to African, Middle Eastern and circum-Mediterranean cultural influences for thousands of years. Egypt has an ethnic composition that is 99% Cushitic (Egyptians, Bedouins, Berbers); while the other 1% is composed of Nubian and Greek and Armenian among other European peoples, primarily French and Italian (CIA, 2003). The US Library of Congress report for Egypt states that in 1989 there were between 500,000 to one million Arab Bedouins; 350,000 Greeks; 160,000 Nubians; 12,000 Armenians; and 6000 Berber Bedouins.[25] There are two predominant religions in Egypt, 94% Muslim (Sunni majority), while the remaining 6% are Coptic Christians and other (CIA, 2003). While it is claimed that Copts represent less than 10% of Egypt's total population, "these numbers are debated."[26] The official language is Arabic, although French and English are widely understood by educated classes. Literacy is 57.7%; of these 68.3% are male (CIA, 2003).

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[24] All figures July 2003 estimates.
[25] 2005 website: //1cweb2.loc.government/cgi~bin/query/r?frd/cstdyi@field

THE COMMUNITY SITES: DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The following is a brief ethnographic background that serves as an introduction to the communities where research for this study was conducted in Egypt from September 1999 to March 2001. Fieldwork sites were urban-based, Alexandria; and rural-based, among the *Awlad 'Ali* Bedouins of Egypt's Western Desert. This study was participant-observation-based as the researcher shared in the day-to-day experiences of people living in the aforementioned locations. Living in two regions, urban and rural, regularly alternating from one to the other, enabled valuable comparative data to be secured on the transitional states of change, the nature of those changes, and resistance to change at conceptual, perceptional, attitudinal, valuational, and behavioral levels. It enabled the researcher to assess the varying degrees of breakdown of a traditional universe in exchange for alternative paradigms of reality.

Both sexes were incorporated into the study for two reasons: male-female social and sexual interaction is a central concern of the Modesty Code schema; and secondly, studies which implicate both sexes and do not provide the opportunity for voices of both sexes to speak are biased. This research was, again (see Collins 1996), grounded in the domains of courtship, marriage and sexuality, as they are principle areas of concern in the Modesty Code schema. Thus, it is within this setting that the Modesty Code phenomenon was investigated and provides a sense of the fieldwork experience.

So who is affected by the Modesty Code phenomenon in Egypt? The short answer to this question is 'everyone'. And here's the qualifier, - *if* one enters a specific 'cultural-environmental space'[27] in which the Modesty Code schema has a cognitive hegemony, then the individual - notwithstanding sex, age, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic class, educational status, and most significantly, regardless of the individual's own beliefs, perceptions, and values - will be impacted in varying degrees, both explicitly and tacitly, on some level of one's life.

This fact impacted the selection criteria for purposive sampling, subsequently reshaping the urban subset of the sample. For the sample to be an authentic representation of the operation of the Modesty Code strain (schema) in Egypt, it necessitated that sampling was not limited to Egyptians, but rather, could, and should, be extended to incorporate *residents of Egypt*,[28] as there is no one, nor any area of life in this shared cultural-environment which was exempt from some influence of the Modesty Code schema. For as Bernard (1995:95) states, "my first interviews taught me that I had to interview people whom I had never considered". Consequently, the purposive sample of this study consists of a broad range of participants - all *'residents of Egypt*" who must deal with the impact of the Modesty Code schema in one form or another in varying degrees in their lives; also it reflects a realistic slice of the cultural-environmental life in Egypt.

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[26] 2005 website www.website1.com/odyessey/week3/FYI02A.html

[27] For information on the experiences of individuals or families (both first and second generation) who have emigrated from cultural-environmental regions in which the Modesty Code schema has a cognitive hegemony to countries where it does not, see Collins 1996, 1997.

THE URBAN SITE: ALEXANDRIA

The urban aspect of this fieldwork was conducted in Alexandria, Egypt's second largest city and main port, situated on the Mediterranean Sea with a population of 3,891,000.[29] It is Egypt's principal commercial, transportation and industrial center, as well as an important tourist resort. Alexandria was deliberately chosen as the urban site because it is both an ancient and contemporary doorway that has enabled exposure to external cultural influences for thousands of years, resulting in an ethnic and religious diversity that is culturally interwoven with both traditional and current lifeways in a communally-shared cultural-environmental space. Moreover, Alexandria tends to be overlooked in the literature, Cairo being a common choice for researchers.

The urban subset of the sample, based in Alexandria, consisted of two subgroups: 48 Egyptian Alexandrians and 45 non-Egyptian Alexandrians. The non-Egyptian subgroup includes a wide range of ethnicities: African: Sudanese; Circum-Mediterranean: Italian; South Asian: Indian, Pakistanis, Nepali; South-East Asian: Burmese, Filipino; South Asian: Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Eastern European: Armenians; Western European: British, Dutch, German, Swedish; North American: Americans and Canadians. A number of these respondents from different ethnic groups were third or fourth generation Alexandrians who provided invaluable data with respect to change and resistance to change. In addition to the core of 93 urban Alexandrians, a number of interviews were conducted with individuals who live in Cairo, Agamy, and in nearby surrounding communities.

THE RURAL SITE: SECTORS OF THE WESTERN DESERT

Although the research design included sampling a rural area for comparative purposes, no particular site had been determined in advance. Shortly after arriving in Egypt, due to fortuitous serendipity (a critical unexpected insight that I acted upon) led to

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[28] The phrase *'residents of Egypt'* is herein used as a descriptor gloss and defined as 'residents of any ethnicity who reside in Egypt' (tourists and visitors excluded). Although tourists, regardless of ethnicity, can and are impacted by the Modesty Code schema as well, and many stories were heard attesting this fact, they were not considered at all for sampling. Criteria used in the decision-making process demanded the individual 'reside' in Egypt.

29 www.infoplease.com/ipa/AO107484.html

the unexpected meeting of an individual who presented me with the opportunity to conduct fieldwork among the *'Awlad Ali* (sons of Ali), the most well-known and "predominant numerically" (Cole and Altorki 1998:42) of sedentarized Bedouin tribes of the Western Desert.[30] The decision was made to seize this opportunity to represent the Bedouin for the rural sample population of the study. The *'Awlad Ali* Bedouin base that I lived at is located along the northern coastline of the Western Desert. It consisted of ten *bayut* (households), comprised of 45 adults (over age 18) and 76 youths (18 years of age and under). Some of the Bedouin who also resided at this base were from different *kabila* (tribes), each having their own *bayt* (house).

Residing within this Bedouin base afforded the researcher with the opportunity to travel to other Bedouin 'bases' in the Western desert where participant observation and interviews were also conducted. In addition to the above mentioned Bedouins, interviews were conducted with individuals (both Egyptian and Bedouin) who interact, through work or for other reasons, with the Bedouin in various capacities, such as, government officials, medical personnel, police, trackers, desert guides, and others. Moreover, several residents who were currently living or had lived in various areas of Upper Egypt, as well as in Siwa[31] Oasis, were also interviewed for comparative purposes.

Where the urban participants in this study reflected Alexandra's religious diversity (Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists; there were no Jews)[32] and ethnic diversity (as listed in the above urban population), the rural component reflected the ethnic (*Bedu*[33] or Egyptian *fellahin* from Upper Egypt) and religious (Islamic) homogeneity. A wide range of socio-economic levels and statuses were represented in the urban sample, from diplomats, UN workers, doctors, police, military, business owners, teachers, technicians, and trackers to housewives, maids, part-time employed, and unemployed, including orphans. A less broad range of socio-economic levels and statuses was represented by the rural sample with higher socio-economic levels being less common and lower socio-economic statuses being more the rule. Similarly, a broad-range of educational levels from primary to tertiary levels were found in the urban sample, while in the rural sample the range was from no formal education to secondary educational levels with tertiary being an occasional exception. It is apparent that the urban sample included a broad range of participants reflecting the population demographics of Alexandria's heterogeneous cultural milieu while the rural sample reflects a more homogenous cultural milieu.

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[30] Although I knew well the work of Abu-Lughod, Soraya Altorki, Donald Cole, Unni Wikan, and others who have conducted research in Egypt, I did not know them personally and chose to work independently of them. All contacts for the research developed through engaging directly with residents of the Alexandria and the Western Desert and gradually identifying networks that would contribute to the work.

[31] Siwa is one of six well-known oases located in Egypt, the other five being: *Kharga, Dhakla, Farafra, Bahariya*, and *Al-Faiyum*. Siwa is located approximately 300km SW from Marsa Matruh, a four hour drive; Marsa Matruh is a four hour drive from Alexandria.

[32] However, there were Coptic Christians in the sample, although many are present in Alexandria.

[33] Bedouin, although acknowledging they are Arab, consider themselves to be a different and separate ethnicity from Egyptians.

Alexandria, one of the main urban centers for individuals living along the "northwest coast", performs an important role socially and economically in the lives of the Bedouin. For those Bedouin who can afford to do so, (and many cannot), Alexandria is the largest (but not the only center) in which to shop, to send sons to school, to see a doctor or dentist, to visit relatives, and so on. Either way, urban and rural populations all must, in one way or another, deal with some aspect of the Modesty Code schema.

DATA COLLECTION

DATA SOURCES

A concurrent and ongoing process of drawing on diversified data sources was followed throughout the full research period. The first and most obvious 'data sources' were the people interviewed noted above, and other residents of the selected communities. Information was gathered from individuals using the methods of participant observation and various interviewing techniques, conducted over an extended period of time (18 months). Attention was also paid throughout the research to nonverbal communication. Non-verbal communication is an extensive and complex field of study. Two well-known non-verbal communication domains that have been researched anthropologically are *proxemics* (use of cultural space) a term coined by Hall (1959; 1966; 1983) and *kinesics* (use of body movement) a term coined by Birdwhistle (1952; 1970). Subtle and deeper levels of data are transmitted, consciously and unconsciously, through human non-verbal communication. Various non-verbal cues (nuance of behavior in facial expression, gestures, tone of voice, hesitations in answering, silences, and so on) by respondents and others, were observed and probed to examine undisclosed (withheld or hidden) attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and to elucidate tacit and covert levels of operation. These non-verbal cues were observed and recorded, along with their contextualization and local meanings, and incorporated into findings and analysis.

Content with respect to the Modesty Code schema, both manifest and latent, of various media transmissions (newspapers, television, satellite, and film) in Egypt were also examined. The above primary data sources were supplemented with secondary data sources from the literature. The Modesty Code schema, as expressed both historically and in contemporary times, in Middle Eastern, African, and circum-Mediterranean regions was examined in anthropological, ethnographic, geographic, and historical, literature. These sources were used prior to beginning the research to identify the existing bodies of work produced by scholars and researchers on the Modesty Code schema and were returned to as the research proceeded to test and evaluate my own experiences and observations against statements within these texts. I documented and examined the nature of the content transmitted, (Modesty Code representations) and its replication, assessing the degree of variation in conceptualizations, perceptions, attitudes, values, behaviors, and so on. In addition, I examined and assessed the factors and methods employed to facilitate or thwart replication, maintenance and transmission of the Modesty Code schema.

Legal and human rights discourse with respect to various aspects of the Modesty Code schema, such as female circumcision, honor murder, and so on, specifically in Northeast Africa, various regions in the Middle East, and in North America were also examined. Education, development studies, and education and development (WID, WAD, GAD, GED) literature were examined for issues that pertain to the Modesty Code schema in South nations. I reviewed, for example, both the impact of the Modesty Code schema on education and the impact of education on the Modesty Code schema.

These secondary sources were examined comparatively with data collected through participant observation, observation, interviews and nonverbal communication. They were also used as reference sources for historical and geographic information as well as to examine change and resistance to change with respect to the Modesty Code schema.

SAMPLING

The object of qualitative sampling is to find something of the larger picture with the aim of acquiring truth, or some sort of notion of truth-value. In general, such sampling is non-probabilistic and it is inappropriate to apply statistical procedures to develop generalizations about a defined population from these data. As samples are, by definition, drawn from a delineated population, there is always a definition of 'the population' that underlies such sampling, and in this study that is those people who are involved with, or subject to, the phenomenon of interest, i.e., effected by the Modesty Code schema in Egypt. As discussed in descriptions of the field site above, this is taken to be all *'residents of Egypt*", although in practice the actual population for sampling is more accurately described as adult[34] residents of Egypt. In the typical ethnographic approach to 'participant observation' the notion of sampling is not easily applied; I talked, worked, and visited with as many people as I could in each field site, and gathered data through these natural social events. For the people who were more formally interviewed, a combination of purposive, snowball, and theoretical sampling procedures were used to identify the participants.

PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

Purposive sampling identifies, "people or locations ... intentionally sought out because they meet some criterion for inclusion in the study" (Palys 1997:137). Bernard (1995:95) elaborates on this process as it develops at the research site: "[p]urposive sampling emerges from your experience in ethnographic research. You learn *in the field*, as you go along, to select units of analysis [people, court records, whatever] that will provide the information you need". This pragmatic and flexible approach enabled the researcher to gather data that reflects a diversity of cultural voices on various experiences and aspects of the Modesty Code schema.

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[34] Adults are the main initial contacts and the persons who made decisions about younger people participating. However, as the context was often a family, and women about to be married could well be in their early teens, people of all ages were involved in the research in one way or another.

Criteria used for purposive sampling included sex, age, ethnicity or cultural background, religion, educational levels, socio-economic status, occupation, and marital status. These selections enabled me to supplement and fill in when there were insufficient respondents generated in any category from my routine contacts in the communities. When examining the impact of education on the Modesty Code schema or the Modesty Code schema on education, the perspectives of educators, students, and parents were deliberately sought out. Or, when the relationship of legalities to the Modesty Code schema were being assessed, police and governmental personnel were deliberately sought out.

Included in the purposive sampling process was identification of key informants and other individuals who were more informed with respect to a particular domain being investigated. Many key informants caught on quickly to the nature of the data I sought and were able to point to other kinds of relevant data, or to individuals who would be good interview subjects, moving me from purposive sampling to snowball sampling.

SNOWBALL SAMPLING

In conjunction with purposive sampling, a snowball sampling strategy was also used. Snowball sampling entails beginning with "one or two people and then using their connections, and their connections' connections, to generate a large sample" (Palys 1997:139). In most cases the 'first respondent' of the snowball sample was selected through purposive sampling procedures. Following successful interviewing and the establishment of a good relationship, such people often volunteered the identity of others who might be willing to discuss the topics with me. Using these two procedures several different snowballs were created in several different directions which then branched out, generating a wide range of participants for the study and enabling me to identify useful social and information networks.

THEORETICAL SAMPLING

Theoretical sampling was also employed in the sampling process and blended well with the purposive and snowball strategies addressed above. Strauss and Corbin (1998:201) define theoretical sampling as:

> data gathering by concepts derived from the evolving theory and based on the concept of "making comparisons", whose purpose is to go to places, peoples, events that will maximize opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions.

In other words, theoretical sampling is "sampling on the basis of concepts and by varying the situations to maximize differences" (Strauss and Corbin 1998:82). For example, the conceptualizations, perceptions, attitudes, associated values, and so on, of key words and concepts such as *halal*, *haram*, *'eyb*, strong, weak and so on, were sampled from diversified categories of sex, age, ethnicity, religion, educational levels, socio-economic status, marital status, and regional variations (rural verses urban) in a variety of contexts. In addition, media sources, for example, television, satellite, film, newspapers, and magazines were also examined to discover variations among terms and concepts and similarities and differences were discussed with participants concerning their own perceptions and conceptualizations.

SAMPLING AND ACCESS

What is often called access in anthropological research is partially an issue of sampling as specified above. Through the use of a concurrent and ongoing process of snowball sampling, intuition, and serendipity, the researcher generated several entry points that facilitated gaining access to diversified and unconnected sources. Within the various communities of each of the two research sites, a process of identifying influential community leaders, key informants, and other participants for this study was undertaken. A useful chain of resources for establishing access and contacts was established. The researcher chose not to work within any formal institutions. Obviously sampling using these procedures is an on-going process. Individuals are selected, interviews conducted, preliminary analysis begins, and further sampling takes place. But conceptually, the next activity is gathering information from individuals, primarily through interviewing.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS and PROCEDURES

Throughout the research period, the researcher used a process of participant observation concurrent with a wide variety of types of interviewing: informal and semi-formal, extensive and in-depth, individual, and focus group. For example, as I was engaged in participant observation activities at the various research sites, I shifted from casual conversation to interviewing as that flowed naturally from the interaction. Either during the casual conversation or before proceeding into the interviews, the nature of the study and its rationale were explained to each respondent in a way that each individual could understand.

Sometimes the social context generated both the interview and the interviewee as described above. Other times a respondent or group was selected from individuals identified in prior interviews on the basis of the criteria noted for purpose sampling or theoretical sampling. In such cases the interview would best be classified as 'semi-formal' in that the nature of the topics to be covered was carefully determined in advance (with an interview protocol), although I did not hesitate to stray from the protocol if the interview suggested pertinent information in other areas.

In addition, in-depth interviews were completed with individuals who had specific experiences that would seem to contravene Modesty Code constraints, such as abortions or pre-marital sexual relations, well as individuals who accepted and adhered to the Modesty Code schema. The purpose of these was to reach an understanding of underlying motives and to obtain a diversity of responses to this behavior, expanding further my understanding of the Modesty Code schema. Spradley's (1979; 1980) ethnographic interviewing techniques (descriptive, structural, and contrast questioning) were used as a guideline.

Focus groups are an interviewing technique that draws together more than one respondent to participate as a group with the researcher, and intentionally creates an environment where participants converse with each other as well as the interviewer. The interviewer's main tasks are to ensure that the group stays on, or returns to, the topic of interest for the research and to use probes to move discussion forward. Informal focus groups were conducted with both rural and urban participants to elicit a diverse range of conceptualizations, perceptions, attitudes, values, on various selected domains; to ascertain any relevant unspoken or tacit data; and to validate previously acquired data. Interviews were bi-directional; not only did the researcher receive information, but she also conveyed it as well.

RECORDING THE DATA

Recording data, in every case, was accomplished by note-taking. With individual and group interviews, as well as for participant observation, this was done either during the interview or immediately thereafter. As much as possible, recording of conversations, interviews, and other data, was verbatim, documenting the actual terms and expressions used by the person speaking. These notes included both descriptive texts on observations and conversations, identification of individuals and locations (encoded), and perceptions, interpretations, questions, intuitions, and suspicions. There was no audio or video-recording during this research as I found them to be intrusive. They were also an inappropriate method of recording for this field study given the sensitive nature of many topics (female circumcision, abortion, hymen reconstruction, and other covert or negatively sanctioned behavior) investigated. Tape and/or audio recording would have been perceived suspiciously, generated distrust, deterred openness and honesty, and would have jeopardized the study. Tape recording would also have compromised the richness of data that was obtained.

DATA ANALYSIS and INTERPRETATION

Data analysis, a reflexive activity that operates cyclically rather than as a distinct stage of research, informed both data collection and writing-up of the dissertation. Initially I used an inductive approach "where observation in the field *precedes* the generating of theoretical concepts" (Palys 1997:19). Data collection and analysis were data driven, generated from the words of participants, participant observation, and other data sources drawn on during fieldwork, to generate themes and code development and to develop theory. This initial data analysis relied on procedures developed in Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998) and Spradley's (1979;1980) texts on ethnographic analysis for guidelines. I used both Grounded Theory's (Strauss and Corbin 1998) 'constant comparative method', which applies a sequential coding process (open, axial and selective) and Spradley's Ethnographic analysis (1979; 1980) which consists of the sequence of procedures of domain, taxonomic, componential, and thematic analysis, to generate an initial theoretical framework. Both are inductive and data driven approaches.

For example, in grounded theory's constant comparative method, the following process was used for analysis. In the 'open coding' phase, the researcher asks 'what is going on here' to be able to determine the central problems, concerns, and matters that are important to respondents. I identified concepts, their properties and dimensions. For example, the respondent's concepts 'get drilled into us', 'pounded into us day after day', ' we are told this everyday of our life'. During the 'axial coding' stage, concepts get grouped under categories (which are more abstract explanatory terms). For example the above respondent's concepts are grouped under the category 'inculcation' which itself is a subset of the larger category 'methods used to encode and transmit the Modesty Code content'. How these categories are crosscut and linked are examined. During the 'selective coding' phase, an integrative and refining process occurs for theory. Also the degree to which a concept varies is examined and is built into the theory by sampling a diversity and range of the properties.

A central category, a core category, which is the main theme of the research, emerged. The core category is the 'social and sexual interaction between males and females, in particular when operationalized outside marriage'. The particular classificatory system from which this core category is derived is cognitively conditioned during the socialization process and has achieved a certain degree of stabilization. Factors that contributed to this stabilization process are discussed in chapter five. This core category and its underlying classificatory system occurred frequently in the data in that indicators repeatedly pointed to these concepts.

The guidelines I followed from Spradley's ethnographic analysis were similar to procedures in grounded theory. For example, in whatever cultural scene I was in, I asked 'what is going on here'. To find what Spradley calls cultural domains (large category of knowledge) I located cover terms. You can recognize a cover term by recognizing the semantic relationship that organizes it, such as x is a kind of y. *Haram* is a cover term. Then I asked structural questions to respondents about the cover terms. For example, "what are the kinds of *haram*?" (this is the taxonomic structure). Then I chose a single contrast set (*halal/haram*) for more intense analysis, a componential analysis. Here, I looked for attributes associated with each of the categories in the set. For example, I asked contrast questions such as 'what are the similarities between the different kinds of *haram*'. Although Spradley's language emphasizes 'asking questions' as he is describing interviewing, often I followed these procedures with questions I asked myself as I observed or engaged in conversation.

Ortner's (1973) method of cultural analysis for recognizing and using 'key symbols' in a culture was another type of analysis applied to theoretical sampling for identification of key representations of significance in the Modesty Code schema. Ortner (1973:93-94) states that most key symbols will be signaled by more than one of the following indicators:

1. Local people tell us X is culturally important.
2. Local people are positively or negatively aroused by X, rather than being indifferent.
3. X tends to be represented in many different contexts and kinds of action situation or conversation, and in many different kinds of domains (myth, ritual, art, formal rhetoric, and so on).
4. There is greater cultural elaboration surrounding X. For example, elaboration of vocabulary, or elaboration of details of X's nature, compared with similar phenomena in the culture.
5. There are greater cultural restrictions surrounding X, either in sheer numbers of rules, or severity of sanctions regarding its misuse.

When analyzing the data, and staying within inductive modes of analysis, I found Geertz' (1973) analytic concepts of 'experience-near' and 'experience-far' useful. 'Experience-near' terms and concepts reflect the native point-of-view while 'experience-far' concepts are those that theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life. Thus asking myself "Am I interpreting this with and experience-near term, albeit often translated into English, or am I inadvertently applying an experience-far term or concept?" helped to keep me grounded in the respondent's understanding of his or her world.

One might argue that using Ortner's procedure for identifying 'key concepts' involves an 'experience-far' analysis. In one sense it does, as respondents would not be expected to use Ortner's term. However, the terms that are designated as key concepts by the researcher are experience-near terms, and Ortner's method was only used to identify them.

TRUSTWORTHINESS OF DATA

Trustworthiness of data is one of those qualitative terms that is used as a parallel to a quantitative concept, the concept of validity. Ethnographers constantly test whether or not they 'have it right' by using a wide array of procedures. Following the standards of qualitative research to ensure a standard of trustworthiness, two main procedures were followed. First, on a continual basis, the accuracy of my recorded information, translations, and developing understandings of that material was discussed, and field-notes were examined with key respondents and others. Any necessary changes were made accordingly.

Further, triangulation procedures were incorporated into the study. I triangulated data sources, data generation in interviewing, theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, and types of analysis. Multiple methodological ways of studying the data were achieved through different methods of data collection, observation, and combinations of interviewing. Triangulation of analysis was achieved by using multiple types of analysis: the grounded theory of qualitative analysis, Spradley's 'ethnographic analysis; Ortner's key symbols of significance, and Geertz' 'experience-near and 'experience-far' analytical concepts. Multiple data sources including interviews, participant observation, nonverbal communication, media and literature sources, and kinds of sampling; purposive, snowball, and theoretical, were also triangulated. They were compared and verified for trustworthiness in several ways: interview to interview; interview to participant observation; text and media to interviews; and text and media to participant observation. I established member checks by recycling emerging categories, analysis, and conclusions through a subsample of respondents, providing them with the opportunity to respond. Throughout this process a continuous feedback system was employed and results were refined in light of the respondents' responses.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE RESEARCH

The official language of Egypt is Arabic with English and French widely spoken among educated classes. Arabic is the largest member of the Semitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family (classification: South Central Semitic) and is closely related to Hebrew and Aramaic. The script of Classical Arabic, which is the language of the Qur'an, was modified to a modernized script known as the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) script. Modern Standard Arabic is used in books, newspapers, on television and radio. Among Arabs from different countries, MSA is also the common conversational language used.

I had studied Arabic at the University of Alberta many years prior to arriving in Egypt, but lacking an opportunity to use it in Canada, my language skills upon arrival were not adequate for the field-work. Arabic tutors were hired to assist in rapidly developing the language skills needed. Diglossia is a situation in which two distinct languages or variants of the same language exist side by side in the same community. Modern Standard Arabic competes with the vernacular, a more common and less informal form of Arabic. I learned both the Modern Standard Arabic (as taught in the school system) and a vernacular form of Arabic that was spoken in Alexandria.

Among the Bedouin in the Western desert, the Bedouin dialect was used in local schools as I observed that the teachers and the students always used this dialect in speaking with me. The Bedouin dialect of Arabic spoken in the Western desert has been called a number of different names, such as the 'Libyan Spoken Arabic', or 'Western Egyptian Bedawi Arabic'. This dialect was learned by living with the Bedouins.

Key informants, and/or participants who spoke English, in varying degrees, were utilized in both rural and urban settings. A process of constant collaboration between researcher and participants was practiced to verify that my understanding of a term or information was accurate with many of these discussions occurring in Arabic. Any time a translation was required, either verbal or written, or when I simply wanted verification or further elaboration on a term, a minimum of three sources was consulted. Responses from key informants and tutors were cross-checked to verify meanings and continually explore further variations. Field notes were written in English for the most part, although, many times Arabic terms, notes on interviews, and other conversations were written partly in Arabic and partly in English. Analysis began in the field so it was possible to consult with Arabic speakers whenever uncertainty arose. The final complete translation into English occurred during analysis and with the writing up of the document.

ETHICS PROTOCOL

The researcher's primary responsibility was to the participants in the study, protecting their interests, confidentiality, and anonymity. Names were deleted from transcripts, a code number assigned in its place, and any identifying information was concealed in the 'write up' of this study. Any description that may put the participants in danger of any sort was modified or eliminated. Informed consent, included the purpose of this research project and the 'right to withdraw' was verbally explained to, and obtained from, participants. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of participants, both rural and urban, it was necessary to forego written consent forms. Obtaining a signed slip of paper that would contain individual's names, addresses, and signatures presented an ethical dilemma that could only be resolved by foregoing written consent. Notes were kept in a secure place.

Given the sensitivity of many of the issues that pertain to the Modesty Code schema, for example, abortion, female circumcision, and hymen reconstruction, all legally sanctioned activities in Egypt, and the fact that part of the sample of participants was engaged at some level in covert and/or illicit activity, some participants expressed fears concerning the consent forms disappearing from my possession and falling into the wrong hands, endangering their lives, as well as mine. Their concerns were based on the prevalent and overtly stated knowledge and understanding that theft is a ubiquitous practice in Egypt so that my documents could be stolen despite my best efforts to secure them. My own personal experiences in Egypt lead me to agree with their statements. The proability of theft was deemed to be too high a risk, and a risk that would endanger both participants and the researcher. Thus, on the ethical basis of taking measures to protect all individuals connected with the study from harm in any form, the decision was made to forego recorded consent in any form.

Procedures for ensuring the equivalent of 'informed consent', which is usually associated with signing consent forms, were those more appropriate to working with communities of people who are engaged in social networks with many others who also participate in the research. This procedure is best seen as part of the ethnographic research process noted by Picchi (1989:72) with respect to ethnographers:

> ...we are by nature aliens who must fit into the indigenous classification systems of the cultures in which we study. We frequently have little control over how we are categorized. However, we can try to correct misunderstandings about our identities by channeling consistent information about ourselves into village communication networks.

It was in the contexts of constantly ensuring that participants knew the research that I was doing and understood the purpose of it that participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and assured that in any case no information that might identify them would be included in the final written document. As this information was fed into the social networks of my participants it became widely known in all areas where I worked.

A summary of the research project and methodology used was submitted to the Ethics Review Committee of both departments (Educational Policy Studies and Anthropology).[35] The research proposal for this study was provided to the Egyptian government and permission was granted by CAPMAS to conduct this research in Egypt.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Strictly defined parameters have been set for this dissertation. Notwithstanding the complexity of the Modesty Code schema, discourse is herein confined to an explication of what the Modesty Code schema is, and secondly, what factors contribute to its acceptance, adherence, and transmission. By implication, factors influencing its rejection and transformation are either explicitly or implicitly addressed. Given the results of this research, implications for education and development are considered in the conclusions.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As discussed in the methodology section, the approach to this study was ethnographic and qualitative. One limitation is the fact that much of the 'sample' population could be deemed to be 'self-selected' and that may have shaped the pattern of responses. Secondly, it is likely characteristics and interests of the researcher partly shaped this response pattern, as demonstrated in laboratory research. It is possible a different approach to the topic would have brought forth different participants and different results, and possible a local researcher with a more accepting attitude towards the Modesty Code schema's constraints would also have found somewhat different results. Nevertheless, the presentation of data and inferences for the very large number of people included in the sample(s) can be taken as valid for those people, and providing significant insights into the operation of the Modesty Code schema in Egypt.

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[35] An ethics review was done by the Ethics Review Board of both the Department of Anthropology and the Department of Educational Policy Studies within the university. Each application was submitted on August 13, 1999 and the title of the study was given as "Cultural Transmission and Transformation: A Study of the Modesty Code in Egypt".

CHAPTER 3: FROM INDUCTIVE TO THEORETICAL FRAMING

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this text discusses various theoretical concepts that may be useful in elucidating the nature of the Modesty Code schema and its place in Egyptian society. In contrast, the preceding methodology chapter presents in some detail the process of data gathering and analysis for drawing inductions about the Modesty Code complex from observations, interviews, and diverse public texts. These inductions stay as close as possible to the language and understanding of the participants, what Ortner (1996:56) refers to as 'native ideology', especially when it incorporates not only descriptions of participants but also their explanations for cultural phenomenon such as the Modesty Code. In other contexts these texts may be termed native knowledge, an explication of concepts and relationships among them that display the world as known and understood within a given culture. From that perspective, fully understanding the 'native' language and use of terms is a central task of the analysis, and at the heart of ethnographic research (See for example James Spradley 1979 and 1980).

Whether working with native ideology or native knowledge systems, a researcher moves from inductive analysis to some forms of theoretical explanation of the phenomenon, linking it to a wider literature by drawing on existing theoretical terms and, if necessary, coining or borrowing terms from elsewhere that seem to provide a general 'cover term' for an important category of data. Often this process includes critical analysis of the literature, or of available terms, before they are incorporated into the study. This short chapter presents some of that material from this research, to display a few of the processes that are involved.

INCORPORATING NON-INDIGENOUS TERMS INTO THE ANALYSIS

How did I think about non-indigenous terms as I began to work them into my analysis? What processes were used to think through the relationship of those terms to this work? Two of Clifford Geertz' terms provided a beginning point for the analysis that both contributed to my thinking about the nature of different concepts, and led me to a fairly simple Derridian analysis of linguistic phrases. These terms have been introduced in the methodology chapter, Geertz' terms of 'experience-near' and 'experience-far', or the more commonly known anthropological terms of emic and etic respectively.

Geertz clearly states that his usage of these two analytic concepts means the following: 'experience-near' is the native point-of-view with experience while 'experience-far' concepts are concepts that theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life. For example, then, *haram*, forbidden, is a ubiquitous term used by individuals in Egypt that is an 'experience-near' concept, while *halal*, permissible, is rarely heard. People rarely speak about the things they are allowed to do; rather they speak about the things that they are forbidden to do and the strategies they employ to get around that. Despite the fact that the terms (*haram* and forbidden) are frequently used while (*halal* and permitted) are seldom used, both are experience-near terms. Both terms are used (in Arabic and English) by the populace of Egypt. I used the same analytical process with other 'experience-near' identified terms such as 'strong' and 'weak'. Again, people seldom speak of how 'strong' a man is, but they spend considerable time speaking about how 'weak' he is perceived to be and why.

Of further analytic note here is Wikan's (1984) misusage and misunderstanding of Geertz' analytic concept of 'experience-far'. Wikan, who conducted fieldwork in Egypt, stated that 'shame' is an 'experience-near' term, a statement that I concur with, while honor is an 'experience-far' concept, a statement that is inaccurate. I concur that the term 'shame' is a more nearly ubiquitous term among the people of Egypt just as the term *haram* is, and I agree that honor is a term not often spoken or referred to, akin to the usage of the term *halal*. However, while honor is indeed a term rarely used by individuals in Egypt, it is still an indigenous concept. It is not a 'distant term/concept' *constructed by the researcher* to capture the general features of social life - which is Geertz' definition of the 'experience-far' concept.

Being clear that the terms *haram*, forbidden, and *halal*, permissible, are both 'experience-near' terms was helpful in fully understanding Geertz concepts, and when I considered other terms selected for use in this work. The terms themselves also led me quite naturally to a kind of Derridian analysis of binary opposites. That is, these indigenous terms, obviously make up a binary opposition - one cannot have a concept indicating what is permissible without a concept indicating what is forbidden. They are relative to one another as reference points, specifically in this case, valuation reference frames. One cannot understand fully the concept *haram,* without the concept of *halal*, and vice versa. As my research and Arabic language learning proceeded in the field, this literary approach to textual analysis often proved helpful in my efforts to fully understand one term or another.

On the other hand, the central phrase for this research, the "Modesty Code" may be seen as a good example of Geertz' experience-far concept, or at least and experience-far term. The participants in this study had no specific term, no cover term, to speak directly of the complex of mental and public representations that are referred to throughout this text as the Modesty Code or the Modesty Code schema. Partly reflecting this, the Egyptian scholar El Guindi (1999:3-4) objects to the term, arguing that it is "analytically unproductive to connect the several institutions of veil-haram-eunuchs-seclusion-polygamy" and going on to say:

> I contend that the Modesty-based code (modesty-shame-seclusion) represents an ethnocentric imposition on Arabo-Islamic culture. Clustering these notions obscures the nuanced difference that is characteristic of Arabo-Islamic culture. The modesty-honour gendered opposition is equally inappropriate (El Guindi 2000).

This raises a question about a distinction between an experience-far term and an experience-far concept. El Guindi above challenges this phrase as imposed, and not useful. It is the case that among the participants in this Egyptian study there seemed to be no specifically designated cover term to speak to the representations of the Modesty Code schema. Yet, as we discussed it in the field, many were able to understand the concept and to link it to their own experiences. And in contrast, in my Canadian research (Collins 1996) Arab Canadians had a definite colloquial term that referred to it. They called it 'the box'. In Egypt, however, it would seem to be very close to an experience-near concept that lacks a term to encompass it, the 'experience that has no name'. Whether it is useful as an analytic concept then becomes a matter of how it is used in research, and whether such research contributes to a better understanding of related (or incorporated and recognized) cultural phenomenon and of wider social and cultural context.

Without such a designated cover term, how did Egyptian respondents speak of this phenomenon? In particular, how did they explain their beliefs and distress associated with male/female relationships? They did not, as noted above, speak of it in terms that might be synonymous with the Modesty Code. For example, participants of both urban and rural sample populations who have cognitively assimilated and thus accept, adhere to, and transmit, the internalized cultural representations of the Modesty Code schema, the context of a *male and a female alone who are not husband and wife*, is perceived as a high-risk situation that will inevitably lead to engagement in sexual intercourse. When asked why this was believed to be so, some typical responses were:

"because it is our tradition"

"because it is 'our way'"

"it is the Bedouin way"

"it's the Egyptian way"

"our religion says so"

"because we are Christians"

"because the church says so"

"because we are Muslims"

"because in Islam it is a sin"

"because we are 'told' it is *haram* (among Muslims), forbidden (among Christians)

In general, these initial responses made reference to religion or ethnic identity ('our' tradition, 'our' way). Moreover, the fact that the individual grounds their reference in a collective framing of 'we' or 'our', also reveals that the ideas, values, and attitudes surrounding the behavior or belief in question, are identity markers for the group of which the individual attests to being a part. In this case it was religious or ethnic identity. For those who do not subscribe to the Modesty Code schema or are in varying degrees of rejecting it, and thus not perpetuating its transmission, the typical responses to the question were stated as follows:

'It is old-fashioned'

'Only elders believe that'

'Only the old people believe that'

'I don't believe it'

'I don't agree with it', but that's life in Egypt'

Breaking the flow of this analysis, let me return to Geertz' notion of experience-far terms and the various kinds of terms that may be so classified. With that process fully described I will pick up this narrative, using some of these experience-far terms, to further demonstrate their meaning.

Experience-far kinds of terms have two main sources in this research. Some come from theoretical discussions in the literature, such as Ortner's 'serious games' as a methodological unit of analysis, or schema theory including Sperber's efforts to redefine cognitive anthropology utilizing concepts such as mental and public representations, or the widely used concept of patriarchy. Others are theoretical terms coined by the researcher as a result of inductive analysis, when a significantly large cover term is needed to account for a range of data. For example, the experience-far concepts *endo* and *exo* are added to this work from that process. These words refer to two cognitive schemata that are conceptualized as operating within the cognitive systems of study respondents, thus explaining their use of specific sets of terms, or one term in an obvious binary pair. *Endo* is a term that refers to the larger complex schema of human cognitive and behavioral classification (that itself is operating as only one of the sub-schemas in the Modesty Code schema), to which the binary opposition referential frame of *halal/haram*, permissible/ forbidden belong. Moreover, *halal/haram* is simply one of many binary oppositions (sameness-difference, pure-impure, enclosed-open, contained-free, homogenous/ heterogeneous and so on) that can be generated by the *endo* schema, each a dynamic complex classificatory system in itself. The *endo* schema is defined by the common semblance of inclusion, enclosure, containment, sameness, and purity, thus revealing the interpretive structure of the schema that the perceptions are rooted in.

In addition, a few experience-far terms are chosen from other fields because the concepts they represent within that field seem to be applicable to this work. "Sentinel mechanism" is the best example of that kind of concept here. Derived from the historic notion of a sentinel who keeps an eye out for danger in the environment and calls out an alert to a rouse a response, the concept of sentinel mechanism is used in human biology, among other disciplines. Here it is applied to both people who respond to Modesty Code infringements and other social mechanisms to prevent such infringements.

Finally, some are borrowed from other fields when an appropriate term is lacking in the literature of the discipline(s) drawn on for this study. Their usage is seen as purely analogical, not as carrying the precise meaning they do in the field from which they are borrowed. The occasional use of terms that belong to the domain of computing science are within that category; they are not intended to carry the implication that the mind is a computer or any other mechanistic device, but to provide a term for concepts that are analogical to one or another computer term when cognitive anthropology or related disciplines do not provide a term. Clearly all of the above types of terms (and often the concepts they represent) are experience-far terms to the participants in this work, and they are terms used by one or more social theorists to capture features of social life. Beyond that they share little or nothing in relation to their conceptual origins and meanings.

I now return to the first group of respondents discussed above, those who have cognitively assimilated, and adhere to the belief that the context of a male and a female who are not husband and wife, is a high-risk situation that will inevitably lead to engagement in sexual intercourse. The following will continue the overall description with the incorporation of experience-far terms.

When probed past their initial surface responses listed above, the consistent reason given for why a 'male and a female who were not husband and wife, could not be alone together', was expressed to be "because he is a MALE and she is a female". The emphasis here on the 'male' in that context, means, the sexual desires of the male may not be restrained.

Respondents recognize that sexual attraction and desire can be experienced on either part of the two individuals, or both. However, respondents, both male and female, confessed that the central concern underlying their distress, anxieties, distrust and fears, involved the probable actions that the *male* would take in that context, as a result of his sexual attraction and desire to the female. The specific danger they speak about is that the male may be overcome with desire for the female and be unable to maintain his self discipline, consequently, overpower her, either through persuasion or force, and sexual intercourse will result.

This is a very significant point, as it is males themselves who are expressing the central cause of their own distress n this context as being that of *other males, given the interest and slightest opportunity*, will attempt to make a sexual advance (including rape) towards a female. Moreover, they stated that they knew the male would not be held accountable for it. In fact, on numerous occasions, both rural and urban males stated to me, "One must always beware the friend, not the stranger, he is worse, he is the one who will rape, not the stranger". The reason for this statement as explained to me, is that the 'family friend' has access to the family and thus the females in the family, and he commonly was the one who took advantage of this position to approach the females sexually. It was always concern about the male's action that caused distress - never the female. Moreover, this expressed distress is not limited to Muslims but was also a central concern among Christians.

When respondents spoke of the female in this context she was never framed as being 'dangerous' due to her sexuality, (contrary to theorists discussed by Mernissi 1987). In fact, reference was never made to the female's sexuality in reference to causing distress; nor was any reference ever made to the female as a cause of *fitnah* (among Muslims), or to Mernissi's descriptions of Islamic theorists position that it is perceived to be the males who need protection from female sexuality. They do however support one claim she makes as her own in her work, the idea that the male as the hunter and the female as the prey is deeply ingrained in men and women's views of themselves (Mernissi 1987:33).

However respondents' explanations for the sexual threat to women took a different turn. They spoke about the fact that this threat is the result of the female's cognitive and/or behavioral seclusion, in some form, which has contributed to her naivety, ignorance, and/or vulnerability (physically, emotionally, mentally). In fact the term 'stupid' was used on many occasions. Hence, she could, and would be, easily manipulated and overpowered by the male through coercive persuasion or by physical force and would end up engaging in sexual intercourse.

Paradoxically then, respondents followed this declaration with statements of rationalization for the continued employment of *endo*-generated *sentinel mechanisms* - strategies and structures of containment and enclosure - such as sex segregation, female seclusion, careful monitoring, restricting mobility and interaction, and so on, for the protection and safety of the female.

To sum up what respondents (and others spoken with) stated was the underlying reason behind the belief that 'a male and female alone, who are not husband and wife will inevitably engage in sexual intercourse', and why this context generates so much anxiety, distress, and fear, was twofold: because they had been conditioned to conceive and perceive the context itself as illicit; and, built on the first reason, because of the probability that the male may be overcome with sexual desire for the female and be unable to maintain his self discipline.

Thus, the role of *patriarchal* conditioning in the Modesty Code schema with its cultural representations of female inferiority appears to overrule the cultural representations of female sexual prowess, in that the consistently expressed concern of respondents' is clearly with the female. It is not the cultural representations of the female sexually enticing the male that shapes their behavior. It is the female who is in need of protection against the strong sexual desires of the male, desires that have the potential of not being restrained.

CHAPTER 4: THE MODESTY CODE SCHEMA

This chapter addresses the research question 'what is the Modesty Code?', and in particular what is the cognitive matrix underlying the Modesty Code? The first section begins with a summary view of the Modesty Code as a general profile. It will move from that description to interpretive and explanatory discussions that conceptualize the Modesty Code as a complex cognitive schema. Two cognitive schemas, patriarchal and *endo*, which perform major functions in and underlie the Modesty Code schema, but together do not equal the Modesty Code schema, are expounded upon first before moving to an elucidation of the Modesty Code schema itself.

Following this interpretive and explanatory discussion, I present the traditional 'course of action', that is the structural reference point for mate selection and marriage that has been replicated, maintained, and transmitted vertically, from generation to generation, and horizontally, to the whole population in Egypt.

Bearing in mind the selective socialization of the Modesty Code schema, our focus then turns to displaying and examining the range of decision-making and assessment criteria that residents in Egypt, among both rural and urban sample populations, use for mate selection and marriage.

This is followed by a presentation of the Modesty Code schema's impact on the Egyptian economic and educational sectors to facilitate understanding of why, in the following section, the participants perceive marriage as "the key" out of one's restrictive psycho-social circumstances and personal pain and the means to upward social mobility and economic security.

Lastly, this is followed by a discussion of just one of the Modesty Code schema's cultural representations, virginity, and illustrates some of the ways in which the interconnective network of interpretive family resemblances in the Modesty Code schema operates.

THE MODESTY CODE PROFILE

Antoun (1968:671), who conducted research in a Jordanian Muslim village in the 1960's, says the Modesty Code "constitutes a fundamental pattern in Middle Eastern culture". He provides the classic summation of the Modesty Code as follows:

> "Modesty" in its present context has terms of coverage for various parts of the body; more broadly to various character traits - bashfulness, humility, diffidence, and shyness; and most widely to institutions often associated with the above - the customs and beliefs relating to chastity, fidelity, purity, seclusion, adultery, animality, and inferiority of women, to the superiority of men, to the legitimacy of children, and to the honor of the group (Antoun 1968:672).

I have expanded on Antoun's original description by drawing on my own experiences and observations in Kenya, and from my Canada (Collins, 1996) and Egypt research studies, in conjunction with data from interviews and conversations with others who have been raised, either in a cultural-environment that holds the Modesty Code schema as a cognitive hegemony, or households and family where the Modesty Code schema is transmitted. It is presented here to the reader for usage as a basic profile to be considered only as a starting point, a reference point to keep in the back of one's mind.

In the Modesty Code phenomenon the body is conceived as an entity to be concealed, enclosed, and contained, publicly, with exposure considered acceptable only within the context of marriage. There is a prescriptive set of behavioral rules[36] for both sexes, concerning the coverage, in particular for females, of the hair, arms, legs, and outline. Also for females are certain body modifications, both temporary and non-intrusive: henna; *haliwa* (waxing); *fatla* (using thread to remove facial hair); and permanent and intrusive: tattooing; piercing; female genital modification[37] [clitoridectomy, excision, or infibulation and hymen reconstruction). These may be present for any given female, either voluntarily or by demand, and may vary both in their prescription, and adherence of performance. Males also may bear body modifications, permanent and intrusive,[38] such as circumcision, tattooing. and piercing.

Shifting from body observances to self expression, specific character attributes and conduct are expected of both males and females when interacting, and they make up part of their socialization. These include modest demeanor and downcast eyes. More specifically for females, timidity, reticence, and shyness are expected while for males, it is courage, daring, and assertiveness. In addition, restraints may be stipulated with respect to eating, speaking, laughing, expression of humor, and language usage (Collins, 1996).

Moving to the realm of social interaction, there are spatial-bound prescriptions which impact mobility and accessibility to and communication and interaction between males and females, both within and without a specific kinship relationship. Extended family and community members oversee these prescriptions to ensure that observance of these rules is maintained, limiting or denying access to anything outside the stated boundaries. Clearly, both sexes are impacted by the spatial and interactive strictures, sharring similar effects, as well as experiencing sex- and individual-unique consequences of their own.

This leads us to the wider domain of institutions that have generally been found to be associated with, support, reinforce, and contribute to perpetuating the above mentioned behavioral aspects of the Modesty Code. Some of these institutions are: virginity testing; female genital modification - both female circumcision[39] and hymen reconstruction; female seclusion; sex segregation; veiling; endogamy, in particular promotion of patrilateral parallel-cousin marriage, arranged marriage, and child marriage; morality and modesty squads; and honor murder[40] to name a few.

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[36] Age for adhering to specific rules varies from group to group.

[37] For a more in-depth examination of the conceptualization of female circumcision, see Collins 1997.

[38] This profile is speaking to the Modesty Code schema. It is not speaking to males who bear tattoos or piercings for reasons outside the Modesty Code schema. In fact, males who have ear piercings tend to receive a negative response in general, from individuals who are quite conservative and traditional such that that many males who have pierced ears simply take their earrings out.

Assuming that cognitive constructions are underlying these public manifestations or representations of the Modesty Code, it is necessary to examine the underlying cognitive matrix to convey and elucidate its complexity. The following sub-sections present a discussion of the Modesty Code phenomenon as a complex cognitive schema. Two cognitive schemas, patriarchal and *endo*, are expounded upon first, before moving to a definition of the Modesty Code schema and an elucidation of how the two previously discussed schemas perform major functions in and underlie the Modesty Code schema, but together do not equal the Modesty Code schema.

THE PATRIARCHAL SCHEMA

Patriarchy[41] is a very old schema (cognitive pattern) that developed in the third millennium B. C. (Lerner 1986:239). It evolved from a "mixture of paternalism and unquestioned authority" (Lerner 1986:121) and its "basic unit of organization was developed from the patriarchal family which generated its rules and values" (ibid, 212). The patriarchal family was first fully institutionalized in Hammurabic law, but as Lerner (1986:121) points out, "the practice is much older". Patriarchy was "well established at the time of the writing of the Hebrew Bible" (Lerner 1986:239).

Two core representations are central to the interpretations that form this schema: *hierarchal ranking of authority* and *compliance to authority.* One derivative of the *'hierarchal ranking of authority'* code is its application to the domain of the two sexes, resulting in a specific conceptualization, perception, and valuation of each sex whereby the male is ranked as superior and the female inferior. This is expressed in differential and inequitable treatment of the two sexes that was already operating and documented in Babylonian times.[42]

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[39] The term 'female circumcision' is herein used to encompass all forms of severity of cut: clitoridectomy, excision, and infibulation. Today, prescriptions of female circumcision among a range of previously practicing groups is declining either in its entirety, or in the severity of the cutting. See Collins 1998.

[40] Honor murder is a well known example of one, if not 'the' most extreme prescription in the Modesty Code schema (Abu-Lughod 1986; Abu-Odeh 1996; Abu-Zahra 1970; Antoun 1968; Collins 1996; and others).

[41] It is important to note that there are a wide range of definitions for patriarchy, both narrow and broad. Lerner (1986:239) provides a broad definition of patriarchy: "Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does not imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources".

In Egypt, in general, patriarchy continues to exist today with attention and partiality given to the male over the female throughout the life of the individual. The preference for a male child (Patai 1969; Mason 1975; Collins 1996; others), whereby the birth of a daughter is met with disappointment and/or shame, particularly in the past, and where the midwife receives higher financial remuneration for delivering a male rather than a female child, is an example of behavior derived from the socialization to patriarchy that is still occurring today in Egypt.

All males spoken with in Egypt, whether they were Muslim or Christian, urban or rural-based, higher or lower socio-economic status, emphasized that although they loved their daughters, "a man must have a son". Bedouin and lower socio-economic urban Muslim males added that they either already had done so or would take a second wife to bear a son if the first wife has not 'given' them one. Among the *Awlad 'Ali* Bedouin, males are 'served' meals, and receive better portions of food, especially meat, than females; educationally, the norm is still that sons are likely to be provided for but not daughters, or, daughters receive limited education in that they are not allowed to attend school beyond age eleven, grade five.

Other examples whereby cognition and behavior between the two sexes is shaped and influenced by socialization to patriarchal values abound. In a hierarchal ranking system, by definition, something has to be higher and something lower. Other expressions, for example, of the *'hierarchal ranking of authority'* core representation that can be found among both males and females are in the domain of age, senior over junior, and in the cultural domain of occupation, doctor over teacher.

Thus, historically, in the Near Eastern, (presently Middle East, parts of Africa, and circum-Mediterranean) regions and today, then, the individual is both 'born, and socialized into' in varying degrees, a very old and deeply-rooted schema, patriarchy, already in place and motion for at least the last three millennia. The entrenched representations (both mental and public) that make up this schema, like all schemas, shape the individual's perceptions and conceptualizations so that they unconsciously follow its patterns and so that performances become habitual "long before they are articulated as abstract concepts" Ask 1994:73). In fact, as Lerner (1986:36) states:

> [t]he patriarchal mode of thought is so built into our mental processes that we cannot exclude it unless we first make ourselves consciously aware of it, which always means a special effort.

The pedagogical method, more commonly known through Freire's 1989 metaphor of *'banking education'*, employed in transmitting this patriarchal instructional code is a derivative of the patriarchal schema itself, specifically the two core representations: *hierarchal ranking of authority* and *compliance to authority*. Briefly, the pedagogical approach of 'banking education' consists of the following process. Teachers, more specifically, those in positions of authority, deposit information through a process of narration, at which point learners, more specifically, those not in positions of authority, are required only to receive, memorize the highly selective narrated content, file, store the deposits, and reiterate the narrated content. Banking education assumes ignorance on the side of the individual not in the position of authority. It is a pedagogical method of indoctrination whereby individuals are forced to conceptualize, perceive, and live out reality in a manner imposed by those in positions of authority and power. In addition, there is no implication here that the bank-clerks, individuals who are in the position of narration, are always, or *even*, conscious of what they, themselves, are transmitting.

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[42] See Code of Hammurabi, Middle-Assyrian Laws, and Hittite Laws.

Within the Middle Eastern and African context, the patriarchal family is one of the most central mediums of socialization. For, as Ortner (1996:39) says:

> any culture's continued viability depends upon properly socialized individuals who will see the world in the culture's terms and adhere more or less unquestionably to its moral precepts. The functions of the domestic unit must be closely controlled in order to ensure this outcome; the stability of the domestic unit as an institution must be placed as far as possible from question.

A central feature of this socialization process is its insularity. This insularity reduces access of family members to alternative conceptualizations of reality. Thus insularity functioning at the family level of socialization facilitates further internalization, replication, maintenance, and transmission of this patriarchal schema. Parents and extended family who are performing the pedagogical transmissions through the banking education methodology are themselves already indoctrinated into the patriarchal schema. Both the patriarchal schema and the perfunctory, or unthinking and automatic, method of banking education dissuade the individual from learning to critically think, assess, and engage in decision-making processes for oneself. Moreover, there is a feedback loop[43] whereby institutions of authoritative power (family, law, politics, and in particular, tradition and religion), both encourage and support the continued patriarchal conditioning indoctrinated at the family level, as well as depend on it.

THE ENDO SCHEMA

Independent from the patriarchal schema is a second schema (cognitive pattern), that I have herein termed the *Endo* schema. *Endo* comes from the Greek *endon*,[44] meaning 'inside', 'within'. *Endo* as a cognitive schema is an internalized, interpretively interwoven complex classificatory system composed of paradigmatic mental cultural representations.

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[43] Lerner (1986:106) supports this finding of a feedback loop between patriarchy and these institutions, stating, "these institutions were supported by patriarchal family and in turn recreated by it".

[44] Collins Concise Dictionary, 3rd Edition, (1995).

Within the *endo* schema all members (cultural representations) belong to the same domain and share an "*interpretive family resemblance*" (Sperber 1996) in ideas and meaning, which is determined by the common semblance of inclusion, enclosure, containment, sameness, and purity. "Resemblance - not the possession of definite features - determines where [endo] is to be applied" (Sperber 1996:21). *Endo* provides a model for cognitive, behavioral, social, and environmental interaction.[45]

Endo (within) is juxtaposed with *exo* (without): exclusion, difference, separation, alternative, divergence, and 'the other'. *Endo* can be expressed by the dichotomous formula: maintaining sameness, convergence, and opposing difference, divergence. All that is *'enclosed'* and *'contained within'* the designated cognitive 'space' of *endo* is conceptualized as pure and true, as distinguished from all that is *without, exo,* which is conceptualized as impure and untrue. *Endo* (which is to say, the mental representations, that make up endo) implicitly conveys the message and maintains the perception of 'sameness', 'purity', a homogenous nature, within the category - be that kin, ethnicity, religion, class, nation, and so on, versus that which is outside the category. Another key interpretation of *endo* is that the group is interrelated and integrated as one body in relation to all others. Thus is must restrict the access of others and be kept under surveillance to avoid, or at least limit, penetration by *exo* forces. Within the *endo* schema, the individual's worth is related to their non-contamination by *exo*.

For example, in Egypt, one expression of *endo* and *exo* is known by the religious-law-based contrast set of terms, *halal* and *haram (among Muslims*), or 'permitted' and 'forbidden' (among Christians), respectively. *Halal* is ascribed with positive attributes: permitted, pure, moral, right, sacred, and true, and receives affirmative feedback and reinforcement from society. *Haram* means forbidden, prohibited, and *tabu*. Interestingly, that which is forbidden, prohibited, *tabu*, and ascribed with negative attributes is *exo* which is conceptualized as impure, immoral, wrong, profane, untrue, and receives censorious feedback from society. Moreover the terms *'haram'*, and *'forbidden'* as discussed in chapter three, are 'experience-near' concepts in that they are terms that are frequently and unselfconsciously used by the people of Egypt. On the other hand, *'halal'*, and 'permitted' are terms that were rarely ever heard.

A second example of the expression of the *endo* schema can be seen in the widespread existence of purity-like representations, their linkage to blood, and a derivative representation as 'blood-purity'. Among the *Awlad 'Ali* Bedouin, ancestral lineal descent (real or ideal) is traced back to the prophet Mohammed and is perceived to be an honorable sign of distinction of 'blood purity'. Bedouin make it very clear that they perceive there to be a significant difference in the degree of 'purity' of blood lines between themselves and Egyptians, whose blood lines are perceived to be 'impure'.

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[45] The focus here is on *endo* as a cognitive schema. However, the overall relationship between mental and public representations makes it apparent there are normally public representations that are parallel to the cognitive (mental) representations. At times in this text I refer to both.

All cognitive schemata are held as having the capacity to generate or create new interpretations and mental and public representations from their existing structure (D' Andrade, 1995). The methodology that is used in the *endo* schema is an antagonistic interplay of binary oppositions. This Cartesian template is used to codify all cultural representations, both mental and public, into one of these two polar opposites, and as Hamady (1960) observed, "with no continuum in evaluation".[46] The number of different binary opposition systems (*halal-haram*, [permitted-forbidden], pure-impure, sameness-difference, enclosed-open, contained-free and so on) that can be generated by the *endo* schema is infinite. Each binary opposition is also a classificatory system in itself operating within the larger interpretively interwoven complex classificatory *endo* schema.

One objective of those who have accepted the *endo* schema (consciously or unconsciously) and thus continue to replicate, maintain, and transmit it, is survival of the schema. That is, the mental and public representations carried within the schema are deemed to be too important to be lost, to 'die'. Thus, cognitive assimilation of the opposing *exo* represents both a 'perceived' and 'real' threat. Two concerns in particular are experienced as most threatening: individuals who do not subscribe to, that is believe and support, the mental and public representations of the *endo* schema, and secondly, individuals who are current subscribers but may fail to "renew their subscription", to maintain their belief and support. If a sizable number of individuals withdraw support, the schema would eventually cease to exist. As a result, an enormous expenditure of energy is put into employing sentinel mechanisms[47] to eliminate, as much as possible, any deliberation of, or actions directed toward, withdrawal of support from the *endo* schema. Only three of the most prevalent and well established are herein described: cognitive (through filtering and censoring incoming information flows) and behavioral insulation and isolation; demonization of *exo*; and negative sanctions for crossing over the boundary. The sentinel mechanisms work together in an integrated fashion.

INSULATION AND ISOLATION

By implementing, as much as possible, cognitive insulation and isolation of the individual (and group) from exposure and access to, and interaction with, cultural representations that are *exo*, the probability decreases of any influence that could create differential patterns leading one outside the schema, and eventually to its disappearance. With little or no exposure to alternatives, and thus little to incite comparison, a greater chance of continued cognitive assimilation, replication, maintenance, and transmission of the *endo* schema is largely assured. To preserve the perception and conceptualization of *endo*-purity, sentinel mechanisms of enclosure and containment will always be found linked with the *endo* schema. Traditionally, in Egypt, mothers (and other female kin such as aunts and grandmothers) who performed most of the socialization of children, because of living primarily in enclosed and contained spaces, have had the least exposure and access to outside influences. This fact alone increases the probability of assimilation, replication, maintenance and transmission of the patriarchal and *endo* schemas into which they themselves were born and socialized.

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[46] Hamady's 1960 study of Arabs supports the finding of the dichotomous classificatory reality grid of *halal* and *haram* (permitted and forbidden).

[47] Sentinel mechanisms are defense tactics; both the watchdogs and enforcers of the schema. Sentinel mechanisms are further elaborated on in the Modesty Code schema section.

DEMONIZATION OF EXO

Another well-established sentinel mechanism is an *inculcated demonized valuation of exo,* set in motion during the family socialization process, expressed by the contrast set of *halal-haram*, [permitted-forbidden], and transmitted through socialization from generation to generation, and through public communication and imitation of others. One consequence of demonizing any incoming *exo* transmissions prior to their exposure to the individual or group, is that chances are increased that individuals, upon exposure to *exo* transmissions, will simply reject them without thought, as they have been pre-conditioned to do.

SANCTIONS

The third sentinel mechanism employed is negative sanctions. The awareness that consequences, ranging from ostracism to physical and/or psychological harm in some form, to death, can be suffered by those individuals who dare to step outside the representations of the *endo* schema, or who critically question its validity, acts as an effective deterrent for many.

IMPACT OF COGNITIVE CONDITIONING OF THE ENDO SCHEMA

In Egypt, one can observe the impact of the *endo schema* - the deeply internalized antagonistic and alienative conceptualizations, perceptions, valuations, attitudes, and behavior that have spawned fears, distrust, suspiciousness, envy, jealousy, and xenophobia, expressed for instance in the ethnic, religious, and class prejudices and stereotyping that run deep in this environment. The conceptualizations, perceptions, valuations, attitudes, and behavior, as well as the fears, distrust, suspicioun, and xenophobia they generate, along with the manipulation strategies to seek protection from these, are transmitted vertically, from generation to generation, and horizontally, throughout the whole population, perpetuating and regenerating itself in a feedback loop. This feedback loop facilitates further hostilities in an already existing apprehensive environment.

Any form of discrimination against 'difference', 'alternative', 'divergence' is framed in a polarizing reality grid of 'us' verses 'them', and is a 'flashing neon-sign' that the individual is unconsciously 'ensnared' by the *endo* schema. This reality grid (schema) is projected and imposed both psychologically on the individual and environmentally where the *endo* schema is operationalized. For example, on many occasions I was told by lower socio-economic class urban Christian Alexandrians that 'if a Christian converted to Islam it was perceived to be a huge 'shame' and the individual would be ostracized by the Christian community. If that individual then changed their mind and wanted to revert back to Christianity that individual would be killed, clearly by individual(s) who would not accept their return to the Christian community.

Another example of the impact from the unconscious internalization of the *endo* schema can be seen with reference to the idea that '"nepotism is the only form of true loyalty" that proves to be unfounded in Egypt. A common recurring phenomenon found among both urban and rural respondents (in various analytic domains: sex, age, religious, socio-economic classes), were statements and acts of distrust, suspiciousness, lying, slander, envy, jealousy, manipulation, betrayal, theft, and injury, of kin against kin. Sadly, the commonality of this repertoire of behavior is stereotypically deeply embedded within the Egyptian, and more broadly, Arab psyche, and accounts can be found in the literature throughout all periods of history in this region back to Pharaonic times. The *endo* schema is effectively stated, in a famous Middle Eastern proverb:

> I against my brothers;
> my brothers and I against my cousins;
> my cousins, my brothers, and I against the world.

In fact, both a Bedouin *shaykh* [male elder] and an Egyptian tracker (individuals who do not know one another) stated independently to the researcher:

> Beware friends, not strangers, as they can be worse in their deception, betrayal, and injury.

As one urban Muslim Egyptian male respondent stated discussing this matter:

> They [Arabs] will stick to themselves even though they betray, fight, lie, and have all sorts of problems and push the outsider out. Even if the outsider is right, they cannot admit it. The problem is always when they come to the 'admitting part'. They will stand together and push the outsider out. When the outsider is gone, they will go back to their own in-fighting.

Clearly, these observations and statements by respondents reveal that those 'inside' have proved to be, on many occasions, more harmful than those on the 'outside' have been demonized to be.

To ensure the continuation of this feedback loop, an enormous energy expenditure is put into employing sentinel mechanisms to enforce adherence and to eliminate, as much as is possible, any deliberation of, or actions directed toward, non-renewal of the *endo* schema. Consequently, this has generated a fixation on chorology (boundaries) where boundary-watching is a primary activity of the individual in Egypt. Moreover, the boundaries are both clear and fuzzy, visible and invisible. The individual's attention is always split in two directions: one eye is on who may be hovering too close, for too long, and/or crossing over the boundaries; while the other eye is watching for individuals who are looking for the same behavior in oneself. As a result, this has spawned both an obsessive monitoring of the 'other' and an internalized anxiety concerning the watching that others are doing of oneself. The anxiety experienced lies in a threefold concern: the gossip that will be generated about oneself; secondly, and more significantly, fear of the excessive distortion[48] factor present in gossip and its subsequent scandal (*fadiiha*); and thirdly, the consequences one will suffer as a result.

It was a commonly encountered phenomenon for the researcher to receive numerous confessional accounts and complaints by respondents, in conjunction with the researcher's own observation and presence to hear such accounts, of individuals who had monitored and 'informed on', not only strangers, neighbors, and community members, but extended and immediate family members. In fact, some of the most obsessive 'watchers' and 'squealers' were those who felt trapped and bitter in their own circumstances, perceiving and believing they could not 'get out'. Consequently, they resented others who were perceived to be in better circumstances or have greater liberties than themselves, and/or possessed some thing or some quality the individual was jealous or envious of. Besides the essential statement this makes in itself, a further downside of this phenomenon is that these individuals were also the ones who attempted to harm or did harm, not only to the object of their envy, but to others connected to that individual by friendship. Whether the individual is operating at the level of the curious and inquisitive, the prying and interfering, or the extreme level as described above, the mental, emotional, and physical energy expended is enormous, impacting all aspects of his or her life. One final point, on a societal level, this monitoring phenomenon has created the presence of a relentless 'Collective and All-Seeing Eye,'[49] the references to which abound in Egyptian mythology. It is in fact the notorious 'Evil Eye', not only found in Egypt but elsewhere in other similar Middle Eastern cultural-environments.

The specific demon operating at the center of the *endo* schema is based on a deeply-rooted fear of *exo*, cultural representations of difference and divergence in which any kind of cross-fertilization, in any form of expression, is perceived as a threat. Adherence to the schema is facilitated by 'sentinel mechanisms' that further promote or enforce enclosure and containment, to keep individuals from venturing outside of both a visible and invisible cognitive and physical boundary. The imposed boundary is, of course, a cognitively-constructed one. Such an insular conceptualization of reality, which *endo* generates, disables individuals from engaging in critical comparison, on any level of expression, which would lead to critical thinking, reflection, questioning, and most importantly, acting. External forces penetrating this inner core are perceived as acting like a glycolic acid in a cleansing context, a substance that will inevitably disintegrate the schema. Rightly so, as *endo* is a closed system. All closed systems eventually fold in on themselves. *Endo* abhors change.

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[48] See Wikan (1984) who conducted fieldwork in Egypt, and also found the distortion factor in gossip to be a major concern. Collins (1996) discusses this finding in the Arab-Canadian context.
[49] There are also other meanings of the 'All-Seeing Eye' that have nothing to do with the Modesty Code schema.

In Egypt, just as individuals are born and raised *into* a cultural-environment in which the patriarchal schema has considerable time depth, so too has the *endo* schema, with its accompanying sentinel mechanisms, been operationalized for millennia, impacting both the psychology of the individual and the social and cultural environment in a feedback loop.

THE MODESTY CODE SCHEMA

The patriarchal and *endo* schemas can be found operating in many cultures both historically and today. Both schemas have expressed different rates of transmission and transformation at different times, in several different societies. Although the patriarchal and *endo* schemas determine major functions in the Modesty Code schema, together they do not equal the Modesty Code schema. Neither the patriarchal nor *endo* schema include the pattern for action that segregates the sexes, secludes females, circumcises females, performs hymen reconstructions, and generates institutions such as honor murder and morality and modesty squads - otherwise we would see these phenomena operating in cultural-environments all over the world - and we do not. It is only the Modesty Code schema that includes this pattern for action.[50] There is another stage of development in the schema formation that has contributed to its unique signature.

The Modesty Code is a particular schema (cognitive pattern) that has been built on the schemas of patriarchy and *endo* and, incorporating these as subschemas, has through a process of reconfiguration redirected the core interpretive focus and pattern for action to the specific domain of male-female social *and* sexual interaction, in particular when engaged outside the 'constructed' and legitimized space of marriage. Through time, it has coalesced into a tightly interwoven complex recognizable as the Modesty Code schema.

It was over twenty years ago that Patai, writing on the Arab mind, stated that there is "an all-encompassing preoccupation with sex in the Arab mind" that "the very taboo of sex creates a kind of fixation on the subject" to the point where it has become the "prime mental preoccupation" (1983:118-125). In fact he says that "the 'pink elephant' in the alchemy of Arab life is the sex taboo". The pink elephant represents that one component that someone is told not to think about, yet inevitably it becomes the only thing the person can think about.

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[50] See quote from Neisser in chapter 2, above: "a schema is...a pattern of action as well as a pattern for action".

Patai (1983) asserts this 'primary preoccupation' influences the perception and conceptualization of both males and females towards one another and of themselves. He further adds that, excluding some local exceptions, two manifestations of this preoccupation can be observed throughout the Arab world. One, it results in both sexes viewing one another "primarily as sex objects" and "that they themselves are so regarded" (Patai 1983:125). Secondly, that males and females must be kept apart "by stringent rules and fences" from engaging in illicit sexual enjoyment (Patai 1983:126):

> All activities of women are considered by the men sub specie sexus, and particularly from the point of view of whether those activities infringe on the traditional rules of female segregation (Patai 1983:125).

In other words, he is addressing two components of the two subschemas in the Modesty Code schema: patriarchal conditioning, specifically the hierarchal ranking of males over female, and the *endo* conditioning, where mental and public representations of enclosure and containment are used to keep each sex in a carefully prescribed relationship only.

Extending and amending Patai's conception, I argue that it is not the '*tabu*' of sex and the sheer numbers of *tabus* surrounding sex that is creating a kind of fixation on the subject to the point where it has become the 'prime mental preoccupation'. Rather, it is the construction of the Modesty Code schematic classificatory system that is imposed through cognitive conditioning (inculcation, banking education, and coercion) during the socialization process that is responsible for generating the "fixation" or "preoccupation" that Patai observes.

This "preoccupation" is not limited to sex per se; rather it is a preoccupation with males and females interacting freely with one another both socially *and* sexually - an 'interactional space' that, when operationalized outside marriage, is demonized through classification as 'illicit and immoral' and thus is forbidden (*haram*). Itt is this demonization that is invoked by all three monotheistic Western religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, to support control of male/female interaction.

Illicit sexual intercourse is the most serious violation of the Modesty Code schema (Mason 1975; Antoun 1968; Collins 1996; and others) and the only circumscribed space where sex between a male and female is not illicit is marriage. In Islam, illicit sexual intercourse is called *zina* and refers to sexual intercourse between two individuals who are "not in a state of legal matrimony or concubinage" and encompasses both "fornication (involving unmarried individuals) and adultery (involving at least one married individual)" (Mernissi 1987:58). The traditional (historic) penalty for illicit sex as practiced by all three monotheistic Western religions, (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) is stoning to death, known in Islam as *rajm*.

To define the Modesty Code schema, then, the Modesty Code schema is a deeply *internalized* (within both the individual and the cultural-environments in which it holds a cognitive hegemony), complex classificatory system composed of interwoven cultural representations, both mental and public, wherein all members (i.e. representations) belong to the same domain and share an "*interpretive family resemblance*" in ideas and meaning (Sperber 1996). In one way or another they are all involved with the innate biological drive of social *and* sexual attraction and desire, interaction, and intercourse - when operationalized outside the framed space of marriage, that has been cognitively conceptualized and conditioned (through inculcation, banking education. and coercion) as illicit. This has resulted in a specifically filtered conceptualization of reality, driven by the inference schemas of patriarchy and *endo*, operating at unconscious and tacit levels, that cognitively funnel those who have assimilated the schema into a particular way of seeing and being seen.

Not only does this cognitive conditioning extend beyond the category of sexual intercourse to encompass 'sexual attraction and desire' that are experienced outside of marriage, but it also incorporates what I call *mutated strains* that have evolved. The notion of mutated strains implies behavior that is different from, but interpreted as related to, the original illicit behaviour. This draws attention to how a simple glance or the suspicion of a sustained glance or the 'mere suspicion of any sexual energy exchange' between a male and female who are not married or, simply a male speaking to a female which, when it falls within the huge classificatory realm of the illicit, can become, and is, the core motivation behind much violence against females and many honor murders. This also exemplifies the expression of *fitnah al shubahat* when expressed as the slightest shadow of 'doubt'. For example, in Mutan prison in Pakistan, females are charged with *zina*, and have no idea what they have actually done to be charged. This 'mutated strain' of behaviour is used as a power and control strategy by some males who, motivated by greed for higher dowry, a new wife, and so on, make deliberate false claims against females they wish to get rid of. One possible response by men, "honor murder", seldom results in prison-time.

If we were to describe the Modesty Code complex as a computer program we might say that the individual receives the Modesty Code schema (preassembled in a specific cultural language) by simply being 'born into' a cultural-environment wherein the Modesty Code conditioning is already in a state of implementation, and it is executable through the process of enculturation. The Modesty Code schema as well as each of its two subprograms (patriarchy and *endo*) has a defined set of instructions that when executed, stipulate how the individual should not only behave, that is, in a predetermined way, but also conceive and perceive reality.

Fisher (2004), using original neurophysiological research,[51] states that sexual attraction and desire (lust), one of three experientially different states (the other two being romantic love and attachment) that comprise the experience of love, is a natural biological drive 'choreographed at the neuro-chemical level' that "shares the goal of successful reproduction". Lust is the motivation to pursue a potential mate, romantic love narrows our focus and energy to one individual, and attachment influences us to stay with a particular individual for an extended period of time to raise children. Fisher (2004:3, xii) argues that "romantic love is a universal human experience" that is "deeply embedded in the architecture and chemistry of the human brain". In fact it is "one of three primordial brain networks that evolved to direct mating and reproduction" (Fisher 2004:xii).

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[51] Fisher's (2004) findings are supported by the independent work of Semir Zeki and his colleagues at University College, London, whose work predates that of Fisher's group by two years.

The point to be noted here is that, despite the fact that humans are social animals that have, according to Fisher, an innate neuro-physiological drive for sexual attraction and desire to certain individuals, an occurrence that is "often unplanned, involuntary, and seemingly uncontrollable" (Fisher 2004:22), the Modesty Code schema denaturalizes the expression of these *social and sexual drives* by the imposed cognitive conditioning of its classificatory system that demonizes and condemns the expression of these drives through *tabus* and negative sanctions when operationalized outside the relationship of marriage.

This imposed classificatory schema of the Modesty Code schema leaves little, if any, space for males and females to interact socially and sexually outside marriage. In fact, they find themselves having to walk between the raindrops to remain dry. Moreover, it is not limited to those individuals who adhere to the Modesty Code schema because they have assimilated it, nor those who simply adhere (for varying reasons). Others living in the same cultural-environments where the Modesty Code schema holds a cognitive hegemony are also impacted.

Within any cultural setting, many representations are replicated but eventually transform significantly, or cease to exist. How does the Modesty Code schema continue to survive, to attain a relatively stable state? Sentinel mechanisms, the watchdogs and enforcers of the schema, are employed to facilitate adherence to it, contributing to achieving a stabilization of the system for continued transmission, and thus its survival. Sentinel mechanisms govern by cognitive and behavioral manipulation and control; and always seek to contain and enclose. Sentinel mechanisms can be expressed in varying forms on a number of levels, from the overt to subtle to covert expressions.

At the cognitive level, sentinel mechanisms operate through psychological mechanisms to ensure individual conformity through filtering and censoring incoming information, through demonization strategies, and through guilt and shame. It is apparent that such psychological mechanisms of protection are a result of the socialization of the individual. At a behavioral level, sentinel mechanisms can be observed from the level of nonverbal communications to subtle nuances to physical insulation and isolation to expressions of physical force. They may also be seen through coercive behaviour exerted by others (subtle and overt, including coercive persuasion).

Sentinel mechanisms are also expressed at the institutional level. They include sex-segregation, female seclusion, female genital modification — especially in Egypt clitoridectomy and hymen reconstruction — virginity testing, veiling, endogamy, (in particular promotion of patrilateral parallel-cousin marriage and marriage 'within' the same ethnicity, religion, and class), child marriage, arranged marriage, morality and modesty squads, honor murder, and so on. Most important to note is that the various expressions of sentinel mechanisms within any given Modesty Code cultural frame work together.

Many of the sentinel mechanisms protecting the Modesty Code schema have been around for a long time. Eunuchs of the past who guarded private female space have simply been transformed to become the 'Morality' and 'Modesty squads' of Saudi Arabia and Israel that operate in public to oversee and enforce the parameters of the Modesty Code schema. This is but one of a very large number and forms of constructed sentinel mechanisms, of which *tabus* are only a part, that have evolved and are directed to the social *and* sexual interaction of males and females who operate outside the conceptualized and categorized space of 'licit'.

The construction of social and physical barriers set up between the sexes within the Modesty Code schema ends up creating the very situation it tries to prevent. Known as the "Romeo and Juliet effect", Fisher (2004:16) calls it "frustration-attraction"; the obstacles preventing union. In this case any interaction outside marriage simply intensify the emotion of desire and passion felt by one individual towards another. Fisher (2004:18) states, "If your beloved is married to someone else, if he or she lives across the ocean, if you speak different languages, come from different ethnic groups, or just come from different parts of town, this obstacle can heighten romantic passion".

The encoding of the Modesty Code schema, which has conceptualized and conditioned the social and sexual interaction between the sexes (outside kin and marriage), as *tabu*, and thus provides no legitimate space for this interaction, backfires because individuals are left no other viable option but to act on covert levels for the natural expression of this human biological drive. Both males and females are willing to take high level risks to get around the imposed classificatory system, despite the threat of negative sanctions, in order to be together. As Buss (1996)[52] states "you can override the desires but it doesn't mean the desires have gone away". In fact, "... our desires are the backbone of the mating system" and "it's easier to change behavior than the underlying mechanisms or desires" (Buss 1996). After all, humans are social animals.

Consequently, many females who are naïve due to their cognitive and behavioral enclosure and containment, go covertly to secluded places to meet males of whom they know very little. In doing so, they face increased vulnerability and risk, when compared to females in less restrictive cultures. Thus, instead of protecting the female, as advocates of the Modesty Code schema claim, the schema in fact increases their potential risk. Given this psychological and cultural environment for the interaction between the sexes, how can there not be distress and frustration in a population?

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[52] Interview with David Buss at the CIBA Conference, Characterizing Human Psychological Adaptations, London, 28th-31st October, 1996.

In summary, the paradigmatic cultural representations of the Modesty Code schema have been cognitively assimilated and accepted in varying degrees, and are replicated, maintained, and transmitted by a segment of the human population, including a large segment in Egypt. The Modesty Code schema operates on and impacts both the level of cognition of the individual and, when it holds a position of cognitive hegemony, the environment in which the individual lives. This operationalization and impact penetrates, in various degrees, experiential domains: psychological, social, economic, political, and so on.

The above presents a description and analysis of the Modesty Code schema, its underlying structure of patriarchy and '*endo*' schemata, the mental and public representations that make up the Modesty Code gestalt, and the sentinel mechanisms that operate at many levels to ensure individuals adhere to its strictures. The rest of this chapter will document, largely as presented through the eyes of study participants, three aspects of Egyptian society shaped or impacted by the Modesty Code schema. These are the traditional structure of engagement then marriage, the economic sector, and the education sector. The chapter concludes with a description of one cultural representation within the Modesty Code schema, that of virginity, to display some aspects of the schema's operation.

TRADITIONAL STRUCTURE OF ENGAGEMENT THEN MARRIAGE

Historically in the ancient Near East and continuing traditionally today in the Middle East, there is no 'legitimate space' for courtship, that is, 'dating' between a male and female alone as part of the process for mate selection and marriage. To enable such a 'space' would be completely in opposition and hostile to the fundamental core of the Modesty Code schema. Instead, there is a 'one dimensional, two-step structure' that exists that is transmitted through cognitive conditioning during the socialization process and enforced by sentinel mechanisms to ensure adherence and perpetuation. Emically, or using experience-near terms, it is identified by individuals in Egypt as "the traditional structure" or the "structure of engagement then marriage". The traditional courtship structure does not actually enable a male and female to be *alone* together and the only acceptable expression of an actual courtship process is in a chaperoned context.[53]

In Egypt, individuals who accept, adhere to, and demand this traditional courtship structure abound. The cognitive conditioning underlying this imposed 'traditional structure' becomes internalized in the individual (the cultural representations are internalized as a cultural norm) and operates on an unconscious level. When this occurs, one can say that the cultural representation, in this case for courtship structure, has 'hold of', or 'captures' the individual. Of course, an individual is usually not captured by isolated cultural representations which usually belong to larger schemas. In this case, it is the Modesty Code schema that has 'hold of' or 'captures' the individual. The control exerted over the individual through the internalization of the schema is illustrated in the following incidences.

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[53] For a discussion on the traditional courtship structure see Collins 1996:29-30.

Many times, unmarried urban females, particularly those from lower and middle class socio-economic backgrounds, unconsciously adhering to the Modesty Code schema, stated to me that when males "begin to speak with me" or "try to interact with me while I am at college", they immediately "tell him if he loves me then go tell my father you want to get engaged then." This is then followed with "if a man loves you he will". This is the accepted response from a girl adhering to the traditional structure. The point to note here is that these males and females have not really shared any time or space in which to get to know one another, certainly not beyond any superficial level. In these cases, the female thwarts that from ever occurring by immediately responding to the male that he must follow the 'traditionally conditioned and imposed structure' (cognitively rooted in the Modesty Code schema) if he wishes to be with her. The underlying assumption on her part is that the only legitimate purpose a male could have for interacting with her is intent to marry. Therefore, he must go directly to her father and announce this (assumed) desire and intention. The father's approval is followed by a public announcement of their engagement, which legitimizes their interaction together in public. This was a common guideline used among many lower and middle class unmarried Egyptian females in Alexandria.

A second example follows. One Alexandrian Egyptian female ('L') who was visiting her sister's family in Upper Egypt called a male on her mobile telephone who also lives in Upper Egypt. When she returned to Alexandria, her elder brother, 'T' (unmarried middle brother), upon discovering this, began screaming at her and called her *shamoota* (a whore). In his anger, he was violent to 'L'. The eldest brother 'D', who was also present and displaying immense anger, turned to me and provided the following explanation regarding his younger brother's violent behavior to their younger sister:

> What 'T' did was right because "L' talked to a man who is no good and it caused *fadiha*. In Upper Egypt the man will say 'I spoke with 'L' on the phone' and tell everyone and 'K's (their elder sister who lives in Upper Egypt) family will be slandered.

What makes this particular incident more interesting, or at least perhaps indicates the way the Modesty Code schema operates differently between males and females, is that 'T', the brother who called his sister *shamoota* for talking on the telephone to a male, was himself involved in an illicit affair. Comparative findings of this kind were also present in both the Canadian study as well as in Kenya among those who accepted, adhered to, and continued to transmit the Modesty Code schema, thus perpetuating its replication.

The number of individuals who voiced their objections to adhering to and further perpetuating the traditional structure of 'engagement then marriage', with its imposed restrictions upon social and sexual interaction between the sexes, was extensive:

> I am not happy in Egypt because I have no personal freedom. I cannot kiss my girlfriend in public. If I have had a hard day at work and want to hug my girlfriend I must wait until we are alone. We sit straight up in the car all the way home, walk straight past the bowab, then get into the house to hug or kiss - but the moment has passed. There is no freedom. I liked it when I went to London because of the multicultural aspect of freedom of speech.
>
> I do not like the normal traditional structure of 'engagement then marriage' but I have to follow it because of the community and all my friends expect me to.
>
> There is little data gained by 'just looking' and no interaction. No chance to assess your feelings means you do not know her, it is not good for a man.

From the perspective of many urban females, Muslim and Christian including divorced, a façade of acceptance of, and adherence to, the traditional structure of 'engagement then marriage', while engaging in covert dating, is a commonly used strategy:

> It's not possible to date because there is only one structure: engaged and marriage. I hate it. I have to do it quietly.
>
> In Egypt dating is not allowed it is not part of the traditional structure. We have no choice but to do it secretly.
>
> I cannot go for a walk with a boy because it would cause problems, especially if the parents are not aware of it because he can ruin your reputation, it causes *fadiiha*. You can meet boys and talk at church, or at college. This is the traditional way of engaged and marriage. So I have to do it secretively and make sure no one who knows me sees me.

Despite the individual's own thoughts and feelings which oppose the imposed traditional structure and all that goes with it, (including the cognitive conditioning such as the conceptualizations, perceptions, values, and attitudes) the decision is often made to continue to adhere to the structure due to pressure from peers and community (and other reasons discussed elsewhere). It is still not that uncommon for a couple to meet for the first time on their wedding day, especially in, but not limited to, the desert.

The next section examines *endo*-encoded criteria used for decision-making and assessment with respect to mate selection and marriage among both rural and urban sample populations.

MATE SELECTION DECISION-MAKING AND ASSESSMENT: ENDO-ENCODED

In Egypt, the decision-making and assessment process for mate selection can be viewed as operating along a spectrum that ranges from *endo*-based to *exo*-based criteria. When decision-making and assessment is based at the *endo-encoded* side of the spectrum, the objective is to achieve and maintain a perceived and projected ideal of purity and homogeneity through the use of enclosure and containment criteria (cognitive conditioning associated with the *endo*-subschema). Here lies the endogamous ideal of maintaining 'blood purity' that is epitomized through patrilateral parallel-cousin marriage. The further one proceeds outward from this 'ideal inner circle of homogenous purity', the further reduced the degree of perceived purity and homogeneity.

Today, among both rural Bedouins of the Western desert and some urban socio-economic poor in Alexandria and surrounding towns, blood purity is still a criterion used for mate selection; thus marriage to kin is preferred. Hobbs (1990:9) reported a high incidence of deafness and lack of speech in one lineage as a consequence of inbreeding among the Khushmann tribe of Bedouin of the Eastern desert.

Decision-making and assessment for mate selection that is based in *endo*-encoded criteria includes not only blood-purity, but also ethnicity (including phenotypic expressions of ethnicity), religion, and class. When assessing 'ethnicity' for mate selection that is based in *endo*-encoded criteria, the objective is to enclose and contain a perceived and projected ethnic-purity and homogeneity. The principle standard is expressed as 'marriage between the same ethnic groups only', in this case, 'Arabs only'. The glossed category of 'Arab' is further broken down into the various 'branches of Arab' and ranked, first, in terms of ethnic equivalence for example Egyptian with Egyptian, followed by perceived respectability, in which stereotyping plays a major role. One's eligibility as a mate is determined by these factors and, in general, these judgments are then applied to each individual or branch of their family.

To the Egyptian, 'being Egyptian' is the central reference point. From this perspective then, individuals belonging to other 'branches of Arab' are perceived as being 'outsiders', 'foreigners'. Thus for example, respondents do not say "I want to marry an Arab", or "I must marry an Arab", rather they say, "it must be Egyptian with Egyptian", or "not an Egyptian with an Iraqi, or Lebanese", and "specifically not to a Saudi" and so on. For example, Saudi's were consistently ranked at the bottom of the behavioral rung. Individuals stated this ranking was based on the unvarying observations that Saudi's tended to come to Alexandria for the summer to act out all the *tabu* behavior that is *haram* in Saudi Arabia, especially in the domain of social and sexual interaction with the opposite sex. They are unfailingly perceived of as being arrogant and consistently treating Egyptians with disdain. The stories of incidents that Alexandrians related to me of this nature, were unrelenting.

The following is a typical example of the ethnic conflict expressed in the domain of mate selection. An Alexandrian Muslim Egyptian male, 'N', aged 32, had known female 'B', age 33, for 20 years. They dated one another off and on throughout the years but due to his family's persistent opposition to the relationship each dated other people as well. His familial opposition to her was based on the fact that she was one year older than he was, (although not happy about this, it could be overlooked), and secondly, she was Syrian, this they were not willing to overlook. This familial conflict over her ethnic difference went on for years. In the end, the family gave up and he married her. He said that his family now "treats her ok" while they say, "It's his life, he is the one who will suffer. It is his mistake to live".

The Modesty Code schema's classificatory system also incorporates ranking of the "non-Arab" ethnic groups, for example, Sudanese, Indian, British, Canadian, American, and so on. This group (non-Arab) is emically glossed as the category "foreigners", and then further broken down into an ethnic ranking system of desirability for marriage, in general based on observations and/or interactions and/or stereotypes with the various ethnic groups.

Another criterion used for assessment in the mate selection process is the phenotypic expression of an individual (discussed in more detail elsewhere). I mention it here because it plays an associative role with respect to the ranking of an individual's ethnicity. The general guideline found to be consistently operating in both urban and rural sectors of Egypt, irrespective of gender, religion, class, or education level was: the lighter the phenotypically expressed feature the higher the ranking. For example, lighter skin color is consistently ranked higher than darker. Within the category of 'Arab' an individual who expressed lighter skin color was ranked higher than one whose skin color was darker. Within the category of 'non-Arab', 'whites' were consistently ranked highest, while 'blacks' were consistently ranked lowest, with the accompanying attitude that to have a 'black' spouse was shameful, "*'eyb*" and that the individual had "married down". This ranking system was also found to exist in the Canadian-Arab study, and among Christian Arab-Canadians, 'blacks' were also considered undesirable for marriage (see Collins 1996).[54] For eye color, blue eyes were ranked highest and greatly desired, not only for the selection of a mate, but individuals consistently expressed hope that their children would have this phenotypic expression. This was followed by green eyes, then brown. Blonde hair was ranked highest in ideal beauty, followed by red, then brown, with black hair ranking lowest.

When assessing 'religion' for mate selection that is based in *endo*-encoded criteria, the objective is to enclose and contain a perceived and projected religious-purity and homogeneity. The principle standard is expressed as 'marriage between the same religious groups only'. This is then further broken down into categories that reveal a ranking system that ranges along a spectrum from an inner circle of religious purity that becomes less acceptable as one diverges outward. For example, then, among Christians, the ideal would be to marry Greek Orthodox with Greek Orthodox, or Catholic with Catholic. Likewise among Muslims, the ideal is to marry Sunni with Sunni, or Shi'ite with Shi'ite. Of course when the ideal cannot be achieved then *some* compromises, within limits, are tolerated in certain categories more than others. Inter-religious marriage (between Christians and Muslims) was clearly stated to be intolerable among many Christian Egyptians in Alexandria.

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[54] In addition, this study also revealed that in the assessment of religion, Jews and Muslims were also considered undesirable for marriage among Christians and Canadian-Arabs. Eckholy (1969) also reported resistance towards inter-marriage with 'blacks' in his study of Muslim Arab Americans in Toledo and Detroit.

> Marriage to a Muslim is an unforgivable crime. There are only two things worse: a Christian who converts to Islam will be ostracized, and secondly, a Christian who converts to Islam and then changes his or her mind and wants to become Christian again.

Prior to the actual conversion, "the priest in the church will try to convince the person not to convert in the first place". For those who converted and then changed their mind and want to return to Christianity, some stated that "they are forgiven and taken back", while others stated, "it is not possible for them to return and they will then be killed". One Christian Egyptian male put it this way:

> If a Christian man marries a Muslim woman he is thrown out of church. If he wants to return [to Christianity], he is welcomed. If a Muslim man marries a Christian woman and she wants to return [to Christianity], she is killed.

This view is not limited to lower- and middle-class Egyptians; it also exists among higher socio-economic Christian Egyptians, as the following, stated by a Christian doctor, demonstrates:

> If a Christian converts from Christianity to Islam it is a shame for the whole family. Therefore families never let their Christian daughters marry Muslims because they try to convert them and the government encourages this. If one does convert to Muslim and then returns to Christian religion, then they must either go to prison or be killed. They would rather kill their own daughter then have her convert.

Among some individuals a more relaxed attitude is expressed; for example, if the individuals involved belong to two different Christian sects, say Greek Orthodox and Catholic, then the perception and attitude is, 'well at least they are Christian'. Among other individuals a more entrenched attitude is expressed. In a discussion with an unmarried Alexandrian Egyptian Greek-Orthodox Christian male concerning marriage to a woman who is Protestant or Catholic, his response was that "The priest in the church said Orthodox can NEVER marry a Protestant or Catholic". NOT EVER IN EGYPT! He went on to say, vehemently, that NEVER could he, or would he, EVER marry a woman that was NOT a Greek-Orthodox Christian like him. "IMPOSSIBLE!!! It was forbidden". He then added that, if he loved and wanted to marry a woman who was not a Greek-Orthodox Christian he would, of course, simply employ the strategy of taking her to the church, have the priest convert her to Greek-Orthodox and then marry her. This last example illustrates how not only can, and does, the issue of an inter-religious marriage still trigger and evoke, among many, an *endo*-encoded sharply hostile demonizing response, revealing the depths of the conditioning that has been unconsciously internalized, but so too does the suggestion of marriage to an individual who is in the same religion but from a different sect.

From the Islamic perspective, inter-religious marriage can occur only if the non-Muslim individual converts to Islam (the *endo*-encoded criteria here is obvious, as is the ability to 'manage' that criterion in more than one way). In reality, this liberty to marry a non-Muslim only extends to the other two monotheistic Western religions of Christianity or Judaism. Marriage was not even a consideration to individuals who subscribe to the major Eastern religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism. Moreover, in Egypt, given the prevalent negative sentiment against Jews, I never once heard anyone consider marriage to a Jew acceptable, even if the Jewish individual would be willing to convert to Islam.

When assessing 'class' for mate selection that is based in *endo*-encoded criteria, the objective is to enclose and contain a perceived and projected class-purity and homogeneity. The principle standard is expressed as 'marriage between the same classes only'. Here the projected class purity extends outward from an inner circle of the higher classes with prospective mates becoming less acceptable as one proceeds outward, or more precisely, downward.

Individuals at all socio-economic levels stated that class barriers are a cause of distress and suffering as these barriers seriously impact social relationships and, in some cases, economic relationships. For example, among the lower and middle classes in Alexandria, individuals shared many stories of personal incidents experienced in which they had been "refused friendships"; had boyfriends and girlfriends "dump them"; and had employment denied to them; when the prospective friend, lover, or employer discovered that the individual came from a low socio-economic strata.[55] Class-barrier complaints about the ability to choose a particular mate are not limited to the middle and lower classes. Individuals from among the higher socio-economic classes stated that they too wanted to date and marry outside the expected traditional class-boundaries that parents demanded they use for their own mate selection. However, in general, commonly stated complaints by residents of Egypt (including Egyptians) were that Egyptians in the higher socio-economic classes made the harshest, most rigid, and insular based judgments of both Arabs and non-Arabs. Considering most of the population is striving for upward social mobility, such attitudes displayed by the higher classes generates a certain degree of resentment and hostility from the lower socio-economic levels.

Given the harsh class-based judgments that are the norm, the following illustrates the kind of strategies that individuals stated that they felt were necessary to use to gain an 'edge' in Egypt, not only in mate selection but also for employment. Several young (aged 19-23) Egyptian Christian and Muslim females confessed that as a result of the class discriminations in Egypt, they had to lie about the low socio-economic level of their family. They told peers that their real father was dead and their mother had remarried to a man of lower status. In other words, that they themselves had actually been 'born into' a family of greater wealth and should therefore be judged as a potential mate at that higher socio-economic level, disassociating themselves from the lower socio-economic circumstances they were now living in, and hence being judged by. One of the females in the above group stated that when she told her 'male friend' that "my father was a *bowab*" (porter) the friend "dumped her". She then told the male that "My real father was dead but when he was alive he was a business man" and went on to comment, "so now my friend talks to me again". However, she adds that she no longer wanted this male as a friend "because his judgments are based on the parents' financial status".

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[55] From the prospective employer's perspective, there was no perceived benefit in having a connection with a person from a low socio-economic strata, suggesting not only 'endo' criteria may operate in support of 'enclosure', but a pragmatic economic logic.

Thus, the Modesty Code schema when expressed in the domains of mate selection and marriage uses a hierarchically ranked and *endo*-encoded classificatory system to establish the initial level of eligibility in the mate selection process. The objective is to achieve, as close as is possible, a state of perceived and projected purity and homogeneity both within and among the various categories. Once the potential pool of acceptable mates (for any given individual) is established through the tapering down process of meeting and integrating the initial level of eligibility, in whatever combination the individual's family is asserting they follow, choice is fairly limited or non-existent.

TWO SOURCES OF MATE SELECTION ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

This next section examines two sources of information that can be drawn on by an individual for assessment in mate selection. Not all individuals have two sources of information from which to draw for the assessment process of mate selection. Some have only one; some have no choice at all. Discussion here is mainly of the rural sample.

There are two basic sources of information available to the individual that can be used in the assessment of mate selection. Not all individuals have access to both sources of information-intake. The first source of information, used in the assessment process for mate selection, is obtained through personal observation and experience by the individual making the assessment. Of course in the case of personal observation, what an individual perceives and then interprets that observation to be, may not be accurate. Assessment that is based on the phenotypic expression of an individual is a subcategory of this first form of information, personal experience. In fact it is based on direct observation and can be limited to a fleeting glimpse. Assessment that relies on phenotypic expression gleans information based on the appearance of an individual, and bases decisions on that appearance. However, its reliability can be highly questionable.

The second source of information used in assessing individuals is based on information that is transmitted from an external source outside the self, that is, information based outside the experience of the individual making the assessment. It often incorporates prejudices, stereotyping, and both deliberate and unintentional misinformation. In the domain of mate selection, the individual may have no alternative but to base his or her decision on the information transmitted by others as they may not be in a position to verify the information.

I begin, first of all, with Bedouin females for whom the first form of information-intake, personal observation and experience, is not an option to use for assessment in the mate selection process. In general, the Bedouin female, whether unmarried or married, is denied accessibility to, and interaction with, non-kin males.[56] Her ability, therefore, to make a judgment based on her own experience with respect to a male as a potential husband for herself or any other female is nil. As one Bedouin male stated quite emphatically referring to Bedouin females:

> They are never allowed to see the man before marriage, EVER!

For Bedouin females in the Western desert, mobility is restricted to the area near the *bayt* (household). In some respects, Bedouin females of higher socio-economic households are more enclosed and restricted than females of lower socio-economic classes. Wealthier families may have high walls creating an enclosed compound, whereas among the lower socio-economic households who cannot afford such privacy measures, the females move about out in the open desert to perform their chores. Still, there are limits beyond which they cannot venture. Among the wealthier Bedouin where males may have polygamous marriages *and* two households, one in the desert and one in a city, the females in the urban household are much more restricted than the females in the desert. Where higher-class Bedouin females in the desert can at least wander in a compound, Bedouin females living in the city are forbidden to look outside the window except through the inner screen. When the male head-of-the-household has left the home, it is not uncommon for everyone in the household to spend a great deal of time looking out the window.

For Bedouin females, journeys away from home are usually limited to visiting kin and participating in what is commonly called *kulana* (get together) such as engagement parties, weddings, or when kin may be leaving to go on the *Hajj*,[57] and so on. Females of higher socio-economic households have more opportunities to leave their household for *kulana*, or a trip will be taken to Alexandria to see a dentist or doctor if a medical problem is something serious or of a chronic nature.[58] In contrast, females of lower-socio-economic households are rarely able to venture from the *bayt* and surrounding area.

Given the restricted conditions for Bedouin females with respect to information-intake based on personal experience for mate selection, we come to the second source of information-intake for assessing a potential mate - *relying on transmitted information outside the individual's own experience*. Reliance on this form of information-intake locates the inquiring individual in a vulnerable and disadvantageous position as there is a great deal of room for manipulation here; the information transmitted may be uninformed, biased, and/or, deliberately transmitted misinformation.

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[56] The Bedouin female in the Western desert does have exposure to and interaction with the male doctor who makes his rounds in the area with the mobile medical unit. However, a female nurse accompanies him, and no Bedouin female is ever left alone with the doctor. Also, there is always the possibility that a Bedouin female, when in the desert, may perform a covert glance of a non-kin male.

[57] Annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.

[58] Most commonly however, most Bedouins still await the arrival of the mobile medical unit that comes out to the various Bedouin sites, or simply deal with a medical problem themselves.

Thus, for example, even if a Bedouin female is given the option to accept or decline a marriage proposal, and many are not, her decision is based on the information that is transmitted to her, usually by married, divorced, or widowed females.[59] In general, this is basically all that is available for assessment of a potential mate by the Bedouin female in the Western desert. The following is a typical example of a Bedouin female in the Western desert who was given the choice to accept or reject a marriage proposal, and who based her decision on the information transmitted to her by another Bedouin female.

'A' was 21 years old. Her mother, a widow, traveled to Bahariya to see relatives to find a potential husband for her daughter because marriage to a relative involves little financial exchange. Both the widow and the potential groom's mother returned so that the groom's mother could 'see' 'A' for herself to assess her and then report to her son about the girl. The two cousins had never seen one other. The two mothers agreed to the marriage and then the mother returned to her son in Bahariya. Meanwhile, arrangements were in the process of unfolding for the engagement party that had been set to occur in two weeks. Food preparations and logistics were discussed and the bride-to-be was to borrow a wedding dress worn by another Bedouin woman several years earlier. There was excitement all around us. I had to return to Alexandria but said I would return to the desert in a week. While in Alexandria I purchased a gift for the bride-to-be. Four days later I received a phone call in Alexandria that the engagement had been 'called off'. When I returned to the desert three days later, all the females gathered to exchange the latest gossip, and I discovered the reason for the broken engagement. One married Bedouin female said that she had "seen" the groom-to-be and she told the bride-to-be that, "He is *habel muklub,* crazy [Bedouin dialect] *tarbena* [Alexandrian dialect]) and that she "should not marry him".

'A', an unmarried female, of course could have no access to seeing the groom-to-be for herself. Although she was saddened by this information she "thanked" the married Bedouin female "for telling her". To comfort her the other females told her, "no problem, there are lots of men" (*la moosh kila, youjad rejal kiteir*). A's mother was also very disappointed that her daughter would not marry. When I probed for details to get a more definitive understanding of what exactly warranted the label "crazy", I was told that one married women (who was not from around here) had observed that the man's legs were impaired in some way and that while walking he displayed abnormally wide gesturing of his arms. The impact, for the female, of having to rely on only transmitted information, with no opportunity to verify for herself, is clear.

When I asked my Bedouin host if individuals worried that they may not be compatible with an individual whom they are to marry that they have never seen or interacted with, he responded with this description of the information available:

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[59] Male kin may or may not transmit information as well.

> No, because any physical problems are stated up front - she has one eye, she does not walk right, etc., she is bad - they state it right there and say, 'do you want'? Many women come to see his future wife but no one knows (her) on the inner level. They talk about her mentality. She can or can not cook, she talks, is clean. Love comes after marriage. When they spend time together then they love each other.

Given the fact that the information for Bedouin females in the Western desert is very limited (less so today now that some have televisions),[60] all bits of incoming information are relished, especially that which can be used for assessing males in the nearby area, as they may become a potential future husband. Thus, when I ventured beyond the boundaries of where they could go, I became their extended eyes and ears. Upon returning from my travels and explorations in the desert, I would provide them with information regarding any males I had encountered in the area.

Bedouin males (and some urban males in Alexandria and surrounding urban towns) in general stated that the qualities they sought, that is the criteria they used, when assessing a female as a potential wife for oneself, one's sons, or one's nephews, were "obedience", "not talking", "hard working" and "beauty". Moreover, the phenotypic expression of 'youthfulness' was a quality they also looked for in a wife. A sentiment repeatedly stated was that:

> Egyptian women mature physically quite young by say 14-15, but by 25 they are 'finished'.

During a discussion of this issue with one urban Muslim Egyptian male, he elaborated the commonly-held rationalization as follows:

> Traditionally in the Middle East, men have always been older than the females they marry; 10-12 years age difference is normal. The reason they prefer younger women is because once females get married, it is her mentality - they do not take care of themselves anymore because they now feel that they are secure and there is no need to. In other words, they take care of themselves in order to 'catch' a husband, but once they have one, they do not maintain any efforts to look good anymore. Therefore men seek younger women so that her looks will last longer.

While another urban Muslim Egyptian says:

> Egypt likes the man to be about 5 years older than the woman because women age faster than men, so when a man is 60 she is 55, dead, quiet life after her menopause.

Among the Bedouin, families are still quite large in number, and daughters who are the most beautiful are generally the first to be married off, in the past typically by age 13 or 14. Although generally speaking, this may have been the age most of their mothers were married, today most Bedouin girls are still single into their twenties. In general, an unmarried Bedouin female waits until either a marriage proposal for her has been presented to her father or the father informs the daughter that she is to be married.

Many Bedouin (as well as some other rural and urban) males stated that they "did not want a woman who was educated" but rather wanted a "young female as she could be easily trained and influenced". In other words, the qualities of naivety and inexperience cognitively and behaviorally were also qualities they looked for in a wife. Although a male may be able to articulate what he wants in a wife, he still must first take into account and meet or contend with his family expectations or demands, with respect to the four criteria of blood, ethnicity, religion, and class. Having done so, then, in general for the Bedouin male in the Western desert, both sources of information (personal observation and information transmitted from others) are available for mate assessment *if* he is given the option to choose his wife, and *if* he is assessing female kin to be his wife. The following is the typical mate selection assessment process for a Bedouin male marrying kin in the Western desert:

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[60] Not all Bedouin households in the Western Desert have electricity, and many of those that do, do not have it on a reliable basis.

> I had seen her a lot before I married her because we are first cousins. Then my mother and sisters told me that 'J' was quiet, did not talk, was pretty, and she cooked and cleaned. So I watched her when I saw her. Then I spoke to my uncle (paternal). A man does not say, 'I love your daughter and want to marry her', that is *'eyb*. He says that he wants her for his wife and you say it to your uncle and not your father. We did not exchange money because we are family.

For males in general, both Bedouin and non-Bedouin, who want to marry a Bedouin female that is *not* kin, only the second source of information, *information transmitted by others*, is available to him for assessment, as he would not be allowed to observe any Bedouin female. Exceptions of course always occur, and a male may observe a Bedouin female while she is performing some action oudoors, such as walking somewhere, doing laundry and so on.

This particular story begins many years prior to my arrival at the Bedouin base where I lived. A Bedouin mother and daughter who were from a different *kabila* (tribe) and who lived in a town in the Western desert some ways away came to visit the wives of the Bedouin *bayt* where I live. During this visit they had the opportunity to observe all the daughters of the household. Upon their return to their own *bayt*, the mother told her son that one of the daughters, who was 13 years old, had great beauty and modesty, and that he should marry this girl. The son, 25 years old, who had never seen any of the females of this family, approached the father to marry the girl. After a payment of 10,000 LE (1991) for *mahr*, the son married the girl and took her back to the town where his family lives. I met this girl when she was 21 years old, having now been married for eight years, and discussed her arranged marriage with her. The girl stated "I was told to marry him" and adds that she was "only 13 years old at the time", so she simply "accepted it and said ok".

. Thus, contrary to Hoodfar (1999:61) who says, "One hears about women who were married against their will" but never encountered any herself in Egypt, I encountered many arranged marriages in both rural and urban sectors, and among the Bedouin several of these consisted of *both* males and females who were married against their will. Maklouf's (1979:39,50 nt 31) findings in Yemen also exposed that both males and females have little say concerning marriage and that several males had told her they had been forced by their parents to get married.

There were many Bedouin males and females in the Western desert who stated they did not see their spouse prior to marriage, and there were also many individuals, both male and female, irrespective of whether they saw their spouse before marriage or not, who stated that they did not wish to marry that individual but that their thoughts and feelings on the matter were considered irrelevant. Others stated that they were so young when they were married that they were completely ignorant of the implications. The following is a typical example of an arranged marriage among the Bedouin of the Western desert.

A 19 year old Bedouin female (herein referred to as 'H') was told by her father that she would have to marry her patrilateral parallel-cousin, a 21 year old male (herein referred to as 'A') who worked and lived in Libya. Confiding in the researcher, she confessed that she "did not want to marry him" and that this made her sad and depressed. She became more disheartened when she discovered that she would have to move to Libya upon marrying him "as that is where he works" thus taking her away from her family. The most disheartening part of this experience came when she told her mother and sisters that she would have to move to Libya. They had no emotional reaction to this at all, as she says "they *just* said, 'Libya, ok'". After about two months she found the courage to approach her mother and express her feelings on this matter. She declared that she "did not want to marry her cousin" stating that she "did not even like him". Despite her pleading and tears, her mother's response was, 'you marry him, no speak, *Khalis*!'. In other words, the decision had been made and there was nothing to discuss and she would have to go through with the marriage. Given that her feelings on the matter were meaningless from her parents' perspective, she resigned herself to her fate.

H and A became engaged (piggybacking off the *Eid* feast in 2000) and their marriage was set for June or August of 2001. After their engagement the groom-to-be continued to work in Libya and would occasionally come to the Egyptian desert for a visit. H, in anticipation of seeing and interacting with 'A', would spend long hours dressing her best, adorning herself, and waiting to interact with him. A typical encounter went as follows. 'A' would arrive in the desert, visit his friends, and upon seeing 'H' sitting demurely waiting for him, he would say to her in passing "Hi, how are you?" then leave, not to be seen by her again for several more months. She would be "disappointed and disheartened" every time. 'A' displayed no interest in seeing or interacting with her.

Several months later, I had the opportunity to acquire 'A's perspective on this arranged marriage when he returned for one of his visits from Libya. He stated that he had been "told" by his paternal uncle "you will marry H". He stated that he felt "sad" because he "did not want to marry her" but that he "could not refuse my uncle", so he "had to say 'ok'". From his perspective, there was "no need to see her or spend time with her to get to know her better" as it was already established that he will marry her so the energy expenditure was not necessary. The marriage had not yet occurred before I left the field. Because H had failed to get her mother to agree with the dissolution of the arranged marriage, her only hope. she said, was to try to convince her husband-to-be to continue to live in Egypt near her family. I do not know whether she succeeded in convincing him to do so.

The next example provides insight into the thoughts and feelings of the previous generation concerning mate selection and arranged marriage. Speaking with one Bedouin male, now aged 55, I asked him how he had chosen his (first) wife and what criteria he had used to choose her. He, quite sadly and reflectively stated, that when he was 26 years old he told his uncle (his father was dead) that he wanted to get married. His uncle sent him to the home of one of his relatives who had two unmarried patrilateral parallel cousins:

> I chose the one who could read and write, and my brother married the other sister. But I was young and knew nothing so I really did not choose her. I did not really have a choice because I was poor. When one is poor, choices are limited. I had no choice because I was poor.

When I spoke with his (first) wife who was 13 years old at the time of their marriage, she stated "I had no say. My father said, 'you will marry him' and that's it. I did not even know how to cook. I made rice which was never right because I put too much oil".

Her husband stated that he then became depressed because:

> We had six daughters and no sons. Any man needs a son. He may say to you publicly, 'oh it is alright I have a daughter', but it is not true. He wants a boy. That is why I married my second wife. But I should have been more patient because she (first wife) gave me a son a year later.

Discussing his perspective on mate selection and arranged marriage, he states that:

> When you are young you do not know how to make decisions. As time goes by, you learn about one another and once you have children it creates a bond. Love comes over time one does not marry for love. You build your home stone by stone, everybody starts out like that. If the couple does not agree they can divorce.

Discussing mate selection and marriage for his sons he stated that:

> Because they do not know how to judge a female that is good for marriage and one that is not, I still need to guide my sons' choice for a mate. I would not allow them to choose their own wives. When a son dates he does so with women who wear jeans, short skirts and they live together. But this is not the woman you marry. When a son marries, the father chooses 'this is a good woman'.
>
> When you marry, you marry with your mind not your heart. If you have sons, it is ok for him to date lots of women but I as his father will have the choice for his wife. I will say, this woman does not go alone to places, she is respectable, this is who you will marry. If you marry for love, you do not marry with the mind.

He adds that:

> If my sons want to marry a foreign woman there is no problem and they are free to do so.

As for his daughters:

> They are sent to school because it raises her value, you get more *mahr* and it increases her value. She can attract a better husband, it increases the quality of her life. Education of women is not a value in Bedouin society that is encouraged. Her value is weighed as only wife and mother.

This next example involves the Bedouin living in Siwa,[61] an Oasis in Egypt's Western desert. It provides insight into the pervasiveness of comparable thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of males and females concerning imposed traditional conditioning with respect to mate selection and marriage. In conversation with an Egyptian Muslim Police Chief who had worked in Siwa for 14 years, we discussed the domain of mate selection and marriage and the problems occurring in this area. In Siwa, in general, marriage to a 'foreigner' is still perceived as unacceptable:

> The family opinion is that they do not accept intermarriage to a foreigner. If they do accept it, it is for benefits that they can personally derive from the relationship. Egyptians are different than Bedouins, they live a different life. Egyptians have many, many cross cultural marriages. Among Bedouins [in Siwa] - it is shame to his family by marrying a foreigner if she does not give up her religion. If he does not practice religion then it may be ok.

Elaborating on why arranged marriages are still enforced in Siwa:

> One reason they force women to marry is so they can benefit off the man and or his family's wealth. Religion says if she says 'no, she will not marry the man' and they force her to marry, then the marriage is not supposed to be official.

A common problem in Siwa is both married and unmarried females who had refused to accept an arranged marriage and had run off with their lovers:

> Yes, you touched on a serious problem. Women running away with a man is a big problem in Siwa. There are two different responses depending if the man is Sa'idi or Bedouin but the motive is the same. The Sa'idi' will take a gun and shoot the guy. Bedouin will take goats. The object is to get back the gold-investment [dowry] that was paid for the woman. The Bedouin are very tight with tradition. Change is very slow and it will take a long time. There is no choice for the girl. The marriage problems are because of the theory of traditions, of what you are 'supposed' to do, are being given up.

In other words, even in Siwa Oasis there are clear indications that males and females are simply no longer willing to blindly accept and adhere to the imposed Modesty Code schema as demonstrated by the fissures occurring in the domain of mate selection and marriage.

Nevertheless, arranged marriages not only continue to occur but are still the norm among the Bedouin of the Western desert and in Siwa. Despite the fact that traditional Bedouin law legally permits an individual to reject a marriage proposal, the reality is that in many cases this option is ignored for both Bedouin males and females, although more for the female than the male. When I discussed this matter among Bedouin females, they responded by presenting a range of examples of how many other Bedouin females, who were in the same position, had fared. These were the reference points that were used to try to gauge how their own 'luck of the draw' may turn out or did turn out. Thus positive references were made to one girl being "happy because her husband is good to her"; or to another girl who is happy in her marriage because "her husband was *karim* (generous) to her"; they all agreed however, that "most girls are not so lucky". Thus most references were made to other females who were unhappy, whose husbands beat them, whose husbands were not generous, whose husbands were poor, whose lives were very hard, and so on. All commented on the fear of not knowing if they would be able to continue to live with or near their family and said that "you never know if you will be able to stay and live among your family or if he will take you away. You must go wherever he takes you." In such circumstances, it was felt that their only hope was that "it may be possible to talk to one's husband about not going". They hope for a male who will be good and generous, and, among the adventurous females, take them away from the desert; and among the more conservative ones, keep them near their family.

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[61] Siwa's population consists mostly of Bedouins and Berbers.

As noted at the beginning of this section, not all individuals had two sources of information from which to draw for the assessment process of mate selection. Some only had one, some had no choice at all. On one level, both males and females recognize that they had very little or no leeway in the decision-making process of mate selection and marriage. They expressed sadness that they had spent their lives with an individual that they had not chosen and realize that they are now in the position they are in because they unquestionably followed what they were told to do. Those that did question had their thoughts and feelings perceived and dismissed as irrelevant, and in the end they acquiesced to the expected course of action.

Ironically, given the previous generation's thoughts and feelings about this being done to them, they then turned around and simply repeated the process perfunctorily with their own daughters and some sons. Yet change is occurring slowly, as can be seen by the fact that some fathers have no problem with their sons marrying non-Arabs; in time, daughters too will have this option.

This sub-section discussed the decision-making criteria in mate selection and marriage among the rural sample population, for the most part, the Bedouin of the Western desert. In general, the norm of that decision-making process still operates on the *endo* side of the spectrum. Two basic sources of information are available to the individual that can be drawn upon for use in the assessment of mate selection: personal experience and transmission of information from outside the self. In the rural sample population, not all individuals have access to both sources of information.

DECISION-MAKING CRITERIA AMONG URBAN MALES AND FEMALES

Many of the previously related incidents concerning the mate selection process are not limited nor unique to the Bedu in the desert. Parallels can be found in the urban sectors of Egypt, namely Alexandria and surrounding towns, and in Upper Egypt. In many cases the differences between the rural and urban populations are only a matter of the degree of adherence to which they are forced to acquiesce. This subsection addresses the range of *endo*-to-*exo*-based decision-making criteria in mate selection and marriage among urban males and females, and the dynamic interplay of these two opposed perceptions expressed in everyday life in Egypt.

MALE EXPERIENCES

Many urban males follow the traditional *endo*-encoded mate selection and marriage structure, with its limited available information with which to assess a mate for marriage. In some cases they rely only on the phenotypic expression of a potential bride. Although this strategy was much more prevalent in the past it is still followed in Egypt today and it is not limited to Bedouin only, nor is its usage limited to 'prior to marriage' only. As the following illustrates, it is practiced after marriage among some urban Muslims today. In conversation with a Muslim Egyptian respondent, I was discussing the fact that I knew many individuals who had not seen their spouse prior to marriage. Commenting on this matter, he stated that:

> Before, when one married, one should not see a woman, whether she was *jamela* [beautiful] or not was a matter of luck or unlucky for the man. Now, *shoof* [look] talk, have tea, go to movie, then if you like, she becomes your wife. Today, one MUST see the woman now *before* he marries her because before she could be ugly. So now it is ok to see the woman first. I told my sister 'I need a wife'. My sister said, 'I know a woman'. So I went to her father and said, 'I want to marry your daughter'. So then I saw the daughter, we talked, had tea with the family, ate food with the family, went to a movie. Then I married her. I do not want to be rich, I just want to be comfortable.

When I stated I also knew many males who, after marriage, still did not allow their wives to have even visual access to males other than kin, the same Muslim Egyptian male stated that:

> It is the same in my family. No one is allowed to see my wife. If my friend comes over my wife must lock herself in the bedroom until my friend leaves, then she can come out, so my friend does not see her.

Incidents of deception where the bride-to-be who is veiled is not the intended woman the groom-to-be agreed to marry go back historically thousands of years in this region. (The account of Rachel and Leah in the Bible is common knowledge). But such incidents can also still easily be found today, as reported in Egyptian newspapers, and as attested to by a number of respondents interviewed as well as individuals spoken with. The typically expressed grievances accounted to me in these particular incidents were that not only did the husband not find the wife attractive but that he did not have access to this information prior to marriage due to sex segregation and because the female was veiled. To reiterate the point here, selecting a mate has been based on a very limited source of information that can also be highly unreliable, as much information can be hidden and distorted, especially when the female is veiled or uses wigs and so on as a concealing strategy, thus presenting a façade of who she is.

In the urban sectors of Egypt, both Muslim and Christian male and female respondents shared numerous stories of Muslim males who, prior to marriage, had only glimpsed their veiled wife-to-be, but had not interacted with her. One divorced Muslim Egyptian Alexandrian male stated:

> She was suggested to me by my friend. I did not know what she looked like before I married her. Her face was veiled. After I married her, I saw her ...pause... she was ugly. I was disappointed and I felt betrayed. We are divorced now.

In Egypt, worth is measured on outward presentation. Hence the phenotypic expression of an individual's features, the appearance, is the single most significant factor in assessing them as mates. A consistent superficial concern expressed by males who adhered to the Modesty Code schema was, "what my wife will look like", "how well she will 'show-off'", in contrast to what he actually feels for the female, what compatible factors they may share, and so on. How do you show-off a woman if she is locked in the bedroom? Consequently, too many men have fallen for the beauty of the outer package only to be stunned to discover the wrapping does not reflect what is inside the package, as we will see in the following section.

I met several Egyptian males, who, having gone abroad for education, chose to make their home abroad. These males have no intention of returning to Egypt to live, yet they have returned to find a wife[62]and adhere to the traditional mate selection process. For example, one Christian Egyptian male, in his 30's, who had gone to the United States for his education, became a doctor, and now resides there. He has been returning several times a year in search of an Egyptian woman to be his wife. Each time he returned his parents would become very excited and participated in the traditional mate selection assessment process. His mother would make the arrangements for appointments with a number of prospective females for him to interview. When he arrived in Egypt once again, this time for ten days, I was speaking with his father about how his son's search was going. "This first night he goes to church to meet one girl; tomorrow his mom takes him to Cairo to see another girl". After the ten days had passed and the son had left for America again, speaking with his father, I asked, how the search had gone this time:

> The problem is 60-70% of them do not want to move to the United States. Some are fat, but smiling very nicely; some have dark skin, which my son said is not good in the States the children will have problems; some girls do not want to leave Egypt they do not wish to leave their mothers. The girls are all about 20 years old.

However this time after interviewing many girls, he had short-listed three females and the three were prioritized. In fact, his father claimed, "He met one girl an hour before he bound the bus to the airport. He spoke with her for only one hour. Yet she is number one priority. I advised him to write to her a lot, to keep contact". He informed his father he would return in February and make his choice and do his official engagement then. This was an interesting case as this particular male's siblings were all married to Americans and living in America. He said he wanted an Egyptian wife because he wanted a wife with the same cultural background that he had come from. As a final note to this story, this male still had not found a wife by the time I left Egypt.

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[62] Cainkar (1988) who conducted a study on Egyptians in Montreal also found the same. My study in Edmonton Alberta was also comparable in that there were Arab-Canadian males who went back to the home country of their parents in the Middle East to find wives or they sent their daughters back there to be married. This is usually a very painful and crisis situation for the families; some manage to deal with it and move forward with changes in life while others resist till the end, wherein all family members suffer as a result.

Unmarried urban males stated they felt they were being coerced by their parents, in particular by their father's to follow traditional patterning in mate selection and marriage (as well as other areas of their life) and to marry a woman who represents a certain set of characteristics. In addition to meeting the above-described *endo*-encoded criteria of being within the same ethnicity, religion, and class, (or combination thereof) as stated earlier, the qualities stressed are that the female should be:

> Young, pretty, and docile so she is easy to program.
>
> She must have beauty, and wealth, and come from a good family.
>
> She should be pretty and of a good financial standing.
>
> It's best if she is young, pretty, works hard, and is obedient.

Not only did sons resent that fathers were demanding that they follow the traditionally conditioned path but also, that fathers were choosing, through coercive persuasion, who their sons should marry. The expectation was to unquestionably obey the father's choice, because traditionally the father is perceived as an unquestionable authority. On the other hand, some of the males confessed they experience anxiety and fear that their father would not approve of the choice of wife they would select for themselves, especially when the female was considered 'outside the traditional boundaries of acceptability'. Others said they had long ceased to care whether or not their fathers approved of their choice. After all, the father was not the one who had to live his life with the chosen female. Consequently, there were many reported breakdowns in relationships between fathers and sons because the son would not accede to the father's demands that he adhere to the traditionally conditioned ways of thinking and behaving:

> I won't marry the kind of woman he wants me to marry so I have not spoken with nor seen my father for over a year now.

Among those males who still resided in the parental home, they reported an ambiance of tension and hostility in the home, with as few exchanges as possible between their father and themselves.

This next case concerns an unmarried Christian Egyptian male, age 26, who lived in Cairo and who had been dating an unmarried Christian female, aged 20, who lived in Alexandria. They had quarreled and he stopped seeing her. He then met and hastily became engaged to another female, having already presented 'the jewelry' to her. He then decided he "did not want nor love" this woman. In fact, he wanted to return to his previous girlfriend as he said he "loved her and wanted to marry her". The following is what unfolded:

> I thought she (the woman he became engaged to) was beautiful, but there is nothing else behind the beauty. So I went to my mom and talked to her and I told her I don't want to marry this woman. She said, "No. You cannot just 'play', the engagement is already done". I went to my father and told him that I do not want to marry the woman and asked him to please talk to her parents. My dad said, 'Too bad. I already went and talked to the family on your behalf, made the engagement, gave jewels, you are *khotuba*, (engaged) you cannot change anything now. You are stuck now. I will not change it'. He insisted that I have to go through with the marriage because we have already made a public announcement of the engagement and the 'jewels' had already been given to her.

In the end the male had to marry the woman that he had become engaged to, despite the fact that he had changed his mind and did not want to marry her. He married her because he was coerced by his parents who are 'held captive' to the traditionally conditioned Modesty Code schema and because as he himself says "I am afraid to oppose my parents". His thoughts and feelings on the matter became irrelevant, as is often the case in Modesty Code cognitive conditioning.

Not only do fathers pressure their sons to marry a female who represents a specific traditional package but so too do peers who also accept (consciously or unconsciously) the Modesty Code schema. Males complained about such peers who first "encourage, then pressure" them to marry a specific female based on her phenotypic features and financial standing:

> Most men go for the beauty and that's all, they don't care about anything else.
>
> Most men go for the beauty she has and don't bother to check out any other qualities of the woman.
>
> My friends push me to stay with certain girlfriends saying, 'she is rich, beautiful, she is presentable so marry her', or 'she's pretty so marry her'. I tell them, 'but she is 'brain-dead'. There is nothing behind the face. The face is emotive-less'. I like a woman who has expression in her face, 'life!' When I tried to have conversations with my previous girlfriends, they only give monosyllabic responses back. They did not understand what I was saying at all. They could not hear me or understand me at all. I want a sincere conversation and interaction with a woman, a togetherness. The women my friends are encouraging me to marry and that the culture encourages too, are trophies, inanimate objects. Who has the 'prettiest looking jewel'. They are inanimate objects, jewels, they look good but there is nothing there. So how can you expect life-like characteristics from that?

One Alexandrian Egyptian Muslim male explained what typically happens among his group of peers after a male has voiced opposition to the traditional criteria for mate selection and marriage:

> For example, one day a bunch of us were just sitting around and talking about various women we know and marriage and things. My friend said, 'I do not want a woman who is pretty but empty-headed'. Right away the guys said, 'marry her, at least she's pretty. You can be with a woman you love after marriage'.

But not all males want this and they stated that this "encouragement to settle for less" is resented by males who "want more". The following excerpts are of the males speaking out for themselves, stating clearly what they do NOT want:

> The problem with most Egyptian women is that they are pretty till you marry them; then they let themselves go, and all they want to do is have babies, not work, yell at you to make more money and buy them more things, and spend your money.

> The aim of Egyptian women is always all planned out for marriage. They see you, want engagement, then marriage.
>
> Egyptian women squelch men. They want an accounting of what he is doing every minute with his time. They phone him every hour on the hour. Their 'aim' is to get a man and then they [he gestures using both hands to entirely enclose and envelope himself]. They see you, then next step is engagement, then marriage, and they get angry when you do not call them every day and night All your time has to be accounted for to them, they control your whole life. No one likes to feel suffocated. Egyptian women call you every hour 'are you coming home', 'did you eat lunch', 'you are late for meeting me', 'where are you', etc. I hate that.
>
> Egyptian women do not understand men and women work together to build a life and what they have. It's a program they 'do not know'. They expect men to have everything, 'oh my girlfriend is married to a man and they have a satellite, mobile phone, etc., my husband must have these things first'. The program is for the man to have everything first. It's completely unrealistic. So men look outside Egypt for wives. Many Egyptians go to Greece, work like slaves, make money, come back to Egypt with 30, 000 LE and their families think, 'Wow! my son, whatever, in Greece, 'big money', etc'. They do not know that they are working like slaves there, living with three or four other Egyptians in an apartment together, dating lots of Greek women, kissing in the open. Egyptian women do not know any better. No one taught them any differently. They simply 'DO NOT KNOW!'
>
> It's wrong if the man does not know the woman and vice versa. I married for love and so did my friends. It is no good for a man to marry a woman he does not love. His whole life is ruined because he has to spend it with a person he does not want to be with.
>
> The reason why my friends and I do not want to marry an Egyptian woman is because they are too much trouble. She takes up all of the man's time; she does not support him and this causes trouble. She does not support the husband in what he is trying to do. She does not push him to get farther. My friends and I have never met a women like this. My friends and I are looking for a woman who will stand beside the man and support him and push him to the top. We discussed this and we all agree, we know of no Egyptian woman that does this. None of us have ever met a woman like this. Educated women have their own business and interests and will focus on their own thing and have no time for their husbands and his concerns. But it's what we want.

What they said that they did want:

> What I really need in life is a mate that I can communicate with, a partner I can share things with. But there's conflict. My friends continually tell me to marry women I don't want. They say, 'Marry her, she's presentable in public'. But these women are so superficial and empty. Egyptian women are incapable of carrying on an intelligent conversation, of truly being an equal partner.
>
> I want a woman I love and can communicate with, but not a woman who has or is trying for a career because then she will be concerned about achieving her goals, achieving her own upward social mobility, and won't have any time left for me. I want a wife who wants to build a life together instead of expecting the man to do it all.

And for the those urban males who followed the traditional cultural and cognitive patterning, and then came to regret it:

> All my friends who followed what their father told them to do, who to marry and how to live their life, they say they are miserable, and they regret it. Some are already getting divorces. They say the next wife they have they are choosing themselves and not using the traditional and religious rules their parents imposed on them.

Interviews with several Muslim males who had divorced or were in the process of divorcing, (as well as Bedouin males who have polygamous marriages) produced many statements that their first wife was not their choice, while their subsequent wife involved personal choice using personal criteria for compatibility. Some said that they had "willingly agreed to", while others stated they had "reluctantly" gone through with the first marriage to "please" or to "make my parents happy"; "to appease my parents"; or "I honored my parents wishes and married who they told me to".

The urban males in the process of divorcing or already divorced, as well as several Bedouin males, speaking in retrospect and referring to acquiescing to their parent's wishes, stated that, "It was wrong", "It was a mistake to do so", and that they "regretted doing so". Moreover, many added that while married, they were "miserable" and "depressed" and that they "wanted out". In addition, that they were "too young when they married", and "too ignorant of the consequences". The consistently stated reason for this condition was that it was "not their own choice", but rather they married at the "insistent urging [coercive persuasion tactics] of their family". Parents demanded their children accept, adhere, and perpetuate a schema just as it had been demanded of them, not only by their parents but by tradition and religion as well. These males, as well as many unmarried males, stated they were dating and using their own criteria, including love, to judge their compatibility with prospective mates.

THE CONCEPT 'WEAK'

One widespread cultural representation (key symbol [Ortner 1973]) found in Egypt is 'weak'. The concept 'weak' is interpretively linked to 'failure', and denotes everything antithetical to "being a real man". Weakness is perceived as a constant threat hanging over males and a judgment of failure that brings shame. Who is perceived and judged as weak? Males who do not provide economic security for their families,[63] who openly express a want and need for emotional intimacy, who express inner thoughts and feelings of affection and sympathy for females and who express thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviors which run counter to traditional conditioning and expectation:

> Expressing emotion, affection, to a woman is definitely considered a sign of weakness.
>
> Men here are encouraged to be materialistic, think only of making money and never consider emotions. All my decisions are based on how to make more money. This is a culture in which emotions and bonding are very important but no one ever says it. If you ask a person what is the most important thing to them they will say money, business, fame, etc. If a man thinks of emotions he is called 'weak'.
>
> There is a whole side of life missing here in Egypt. All my friends that I have talked about it with agree. It's the emotional interaction. People really want this and need this but they hide this fact. It's how all the people are here in Egypt. The emotional interaction is really important, but no one admits it. To do so is WEAK.
>
> I put all my energy into the business and it's not even what is the area that matters the most to me. The area that matters the most is emotional bonding. So I have stress and I and ask myself 'why I am giving all my attention and focus to work'? Emotional bonding is what is important to everyone in Egypt yet they hide that side.
>
> I am afraid of being labeled 'weak' for expressing opposition to all the traditional expectations and demands made by my parents.

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[63] This was also found to exist in the Arab-Canadian study, see Collins 1996.

Some fathers, knowing the 'psychological hook' that the cultural representation 'weak' has on males, do not hesitate to use it as a coercive tactic to intimidate their sons into doing what they want. For example, one unmarried Egyptian Muslim male, age 29, states:

> My father tells me I am '*weak*', not in words, but in body language, using disapproving gestures, etc.

Many severances of the relationship between fathers and sons were reported because the son did not share and would not submit to the father's demands to adhere to traditional ways of conceptualizing, perceiving, valuing, and behaving. Discussing these strained relationships, several sons stated that they had not spoken with nor seen their fathers for an extended period of time, some for over a year:

> I refused to marry the kind of woman he wants me to marry. He thinks I am weak. I moved out and we no longer speak with one another.

Alexandrian males who do not accept the Modesty Code schema, or various aspects thereof, stated that when they voiced their thoughts and feelings in front of more conservative peers who do accept the imposed conditioning of the Modesty Code cultural representations. they were perceived as and labeled 'weak'. Their concerns here go far beyond being labeled 'weak'. For those males who do *not accept* nor wish to *adhere to* the traditional conditioning that they were socialized-into while growing-up, the issue becomes fear of betrayal. Consistently I was told by these males:

> I have learned through experience that whenever I 'opened-up' and expressed my real thoughts and feelings that are not in line with the traditional agenda, especially when it's something that's '*tabu*', '*haram*,' 'a sin', 'wrong', or because it's not the traditional way and so on, I will be betrayed by those friends of mine.

Moreover, females in Egypt are fully aware of the power that the cultural representation, 'weak' may have over a male. The females I spoke with stated that it was the direct result of this concept that:

> Egyptian men do not share their thoughts and feelings with women because they would then be thought of as 'weak', and the man has to be seen as 'strong'.
>
> Egyptian men must be seen as 'STRONG'; that means they will not talk about what they think or feel because to do so is 'WEAK'.

There are some females who do not hesitate to 'play off ' the effect that the cultural representation 'weak' has on some men using it as a coercive or revenge tactic against the male. Males, aware that some females do this, reported that when they did 'open-up' to an Egyptian woman, whether friends or lovers, and expressed their thoughts and feelings which run contrary to traditional expectations, that inevitably when she became angry at the male it resulted in betrayal on her part:

> If I 'open up' to some Egyptian woman then down-the-line she will betray me and will tell all my friends I am *weak* in some area because I think and feel differently than them and then they will use that information against me.
>
> I know I cannot discuss these things with other guys or women because they will then turn around and use the information against me and tell everyone I am '*weak*'.

They feel they are "being forced to remain silent" and "hide true thoughts and feelings". Given that experience has demonstrated that 'speaking out' has resulted in receiving automatic responses that have been conditioned during the socialization process, males stated they "cannot reveal" what they "really feel inside", "cannot voice their true self", and therefore must remain "silent" about such matters. Therefore they expressed feeling that they simply have no one to communicate their inner thoughts and feelings to who would not 'turn' on them:

> I do not have anyone to speak to about these matters.
>
> There is no one who will openly support my feelings.
>
> I do not have anyone to speak with about these matters labeled tabu by the culture.
>
> My friends and I are afraid to voice it openly out of fear of being labeled 'weak' but its what we really feel inside.

Consequently, these males stated they feel "isolated" and "frustrated" because as they say:

> Who can I tell? You are the only one I have told this too. You cannot tell another Egyptian because they will use it against you.

In addition, urban males expressed not only their "fear [of] being seen as weak" but at the same time confessed "I feel I have *so many weaknesses*" and a "fear of not being understood".

As a protective measure from the potential of being perceived and labeled 'weak' and the "ridicule" and "humiliation" that they would then experienc; and from the betrayal that such exposure would bring that their enemies would take advantage of it, these males stated that they must present a concealing façade of "rigid strength", "neutrality", "disinterestedness", and "expressionlessness":

> I wear a mask, a non-expressioned mask so no one knows what I am really thinking and feeling. But it takes its toll on me.
>
> I hide my financial conditions from my friends at school and wear a mask that 'everything is fine'.
>
> I make sure to not display any interest in any topic so that I appear to be neutral to others.
>
> There are things I am interested in, but because the culture says a man is 'weak' to display interest in those things I have to hide it because my friends would use that information against me.
>
> The man has to be seen as 'strong' at all costs. I simply pretend I am disinterested.
>
> I am an extremely curious person but I hide that side of me because I am afraid that if my friends or others see this side of me they will think and say I am 'weak'.

Presenting a façade is a *pervasive* defense measure used for self preservation. In fact it is a survival strategy used by both sexes that is not limited to Egypt; it will be found in all cultural-environments where the Modesty Code schema is a cognitive hegemony. I discussed the cost of this façade presentation in relation to the 'self'. Some recognize that this leaves them in a state of being "emotionally isolated", or a position of "forced silence". They expressed being "plagued by fears of all kinds", of feeling "paranoid", "sadness", "depressed", "hopelessness", "trapped" and a great deal of "frustration" and "anger". They expressed resentment at having friends and family who "push" them to "settle for" the outer package [socially approved and endorsed by Egyptian culture and society], not the substance. They expressed that in fact there was too much focus on the approval of the 'other', whether that be family, peers, tradition, or religion — thus the necessity of the façade presentation as a survival mechanism:

> My friends have no idea what my real thoughts and feelings are inside. Things I think and feel run counter to societal and cultural expectations. But my close friends and I are afraid to voice this to others so there is always that stress and conflict that we feel inside because we can't speak about it. If we do, they would ridicule us for being 'weak' and then betray us.
>
> I can't speak my true feelings about the restrictions here in Egypt or how I don't agree with it because my friends would turn on me. They would see me as 'weak' for saying it and turn on me.
>
> If you live in Egypt there is no other way to get out of this; you must lie, there is no other way. You are trapped.

The concepts 'weak', 'strong', 'failure', 'being a man', and the associated meanings with it are conditioned during the process of socialization that have become internalized, both within the individual and within the environment. Interestingly, as a final note, those males who wanted out of the traditional conditioning with respect to the concept 'weak', perceived those males who were unable to express affection and sympathy to females as being 'weak', the complete opposite of the traditional conditioning for males on the cultural representations of 'weak' and 'strong'.

FEMALE EXPERIENCES

This next subsection illustrates the range of comments from the urban Alexandrian female with respect to decision-making and assessment for mate selection as operating along a spectrum that ranges from *endo*-based to *exo*-based criteria. All females, married or unmarried, spoke of having to deal with pressure from parents, relatives, religion, and tradition, to adhere to, in varying degrees, a traditionally encoded and imposed trajectory of conceptualizations, perceptions, values, and behaviors.

Many unmarried lower socio-economic class Alexandrian and Upper Egyptian females share a similar position to Bedouin females in that their own decision-making with respect to mate selection is limited or still not possible. In Alexandria, a commonly heard statement concerning females whose fathers were from Upper Egypt was that "the girl will not have a choice in who she will marry, I (the father) will make that decision for her, and she cannot say no". The expectation for patrilateral parallel-cousin marriage still exists among some of the urban poor whereby some parents try to persuade their children to marry kin. I had been to several engagement parties where urban Egyptian females willingly accepted the patrilateral parallel cross-cousin mate selection, while other females spoke of resisting parental influences that try to persuade them to follow this traditional path:

> Z told me he wanted to marry me and I declined. The reason I declined is because he is my uncle's son and I do not want genetic problems with my children plus, he has never been to school. I do not want to have children until I have an apartment that is paid for and all set up and then I only want one to two kids.

Reiterated over and over were the confessions made by urban married females who stated that they had complied with the dictates of the patterns transmitted by parents with respect to mate selection and marriage (and other areas but I speak here only of these domains). They stated that they were very young when they married and that initially they were "happy" and "excited" to marry as soon as possible an approved suitor not necessarily of their own choosing. Many reported they were persuaded by relatives to marry their husband and that they had very little, if any, comparative experience in getting to know any other men. They went on to state that they were simply 'happy to be out of the parental home and living in a home of their own and that they would be the 'lady of the house'. They added that they had fantasized that they would be living a much more liberal life than had ever been possible in the home of their parents. Hence, they looked forward to marriage with anticipation.

They confessed that after marriage they came to the realization that they would not be living the blissful married life they had fantasized, and that in fact the only difference in their lifestyle was the male who did the dictating had changed from their father to their husband. Many reported that they are simply living the same restricted life they did when they were at the parental home, in some cases even more restrictive than when they were single. They stated that they were "ignorant" when they married because they "were so young and inexperienced and did not realize the consequences". They added that they had complied with the traditional expectations out of a "sense of duty", or "to make my parents happy", or because they "believed our parents actually 'knew' something wiser than we did. They stated they thought and felt this way "because we are taught to 'accept' and 'believe' the information told by our parents, religion, and tradition" (Thus did they reflect the impact of the patriarchal subschema in their lives, the patriarchal subschema that underlies the Modesty Code schema).

Not all females who found themselves in this position ended up there out of ignorance. Others stated that they did not 'accept' or 'believe' what their relatives, religion, and/or tradition said was the 'right', or the 'only' path to follow, that "we are quite capable of looking around and seeing for ourselves how miserable all the women around us are who had followed the traditional path". However, just as many Bedouin females were fully aware before marriage that this road is not what they wanted, these urban females stated that despite their thoughts and feelings, and the fact that when they did voice their objections, their parents and other family members invalidated their thoughts and feelings which were, in the end, simply ignored. Consequently, they had no choice but to acquiesce to their parents, in particular father's declarations, at the expense of their own wishes, insights, and influence, because, as they stated, "I felt I was not in a position to act in any other way".

Moreover, many of these urban females who had adhered, willingly or unwillingly, to the traditionally conditioned path, confessed that when they saw other females, especially relatives (sisters or cousins), friends, peers, or simply those in the neighborhood, who did not succumb to the conditioning of the program that their parents, relatives, tradition, religion, and society pressured them to follow, they experienced deep regret for doing so themselves. They stated that when they "look around and see" for themselves, that those females are now living in better circumstances with more liberal lifestyles, and that they are much happier than they are, the realization dawns on them that by adhering to the traditionally expected path the female has become trapped in a cognitive and behavioral groove in which these liberalities will never be available to her. The following were commonly heard stories among urban Alexandrian females:

> I finished high school and just wanted to get married. I rushed. I wanted to have my own home because there were so many restrictions in my parents home. I thought my life would be different. I thought I would be happy because I would be gone from my parents home. But its not really that different. Sometimes its worse. Now I am stuck; there is nothing I can do. All three of my younger sisters already have more than I will ever have. They are still unmarried, they never rushed like me. They see different men, they go places and do things I never got to do, and now I will never get to do them. The church will not let me get a divorce. It's not fair. Even a Muslim woman can get a divorce.
>
> My aunt introduced me to my husband, he is 13 years older than me. We became engaged and then we went to the café, talked, and to the movies. He is the only man I dated. My parents encouraged me to marry him and I wanted to make them happy so I did. I made them happy but I did not make myself happy. My cousins who are younger than me will have more than I ever will because they would not do it the way their parents wanted them to do it.

Many of these females confessed feeling "unhappy", "frustrated", "angry", and "deep regret" for automatically and thoughtlessly following or acquiescing to the dictates of their parents, tradition, and religion, As they said, "look at the position I am in now". Muslim females stated that chances to get out of the marriage are "slim"; Christian females stated that getting out of marriage is "near impossible". Thus there is the conscious awareness that she has become "trapped-in" a 'reality box' that impacts all aspects of her life spatially and temporally. Being fully cognizant of the probable unfolding path that her life will take, full of restrictions and barriers that she may never be able to cross, accompanied by the perception that she has little chance of getting out of, or of opposing it from happening, she resigns herself to her position, with the religiously framed rationalization that the situation she is in was her "lot" in life, and that it is unchangeable as "It is the will of Allah" or "God".

Some of these married females become embodiments of the tyrannical sentinels they themselves used to resent. They are motivated by inner frustration, resentment, and bitterness and of feeling trapped in a position of restriction they do not know how to get out of. They are angry at themselves for either accepting and adhering unquestionably or acquiescing to the traditional conditioning. They feel envy and jealousy towards other female siblings, cousins, and friends who chose to reject following the traditional cognitive conditioning, and who are now, consequently, living more liberal lives that they know they will never have.

These females consistently expend enormous energy on manipulation tactics in attempts to control those around them who are not operating inside the schema by getting them into trouble through lying, generating gossip and slander, and proclaiming all behavior committed by the object of their envy as *'eyb, 'sharmoota', and so on*. An enormous amount of time is expended on scrutinizing others to expose some shred of behavior that is outside the Modesty Code schema that would generate conflict, dissension, and divisiveness among family members and friends — in other words, all the behavior that they will never be able to do in their own lives, but desperately wanted to do.

The degree of assimilation, thus acceptance, adherence, and perpetuation of the traditional conditioning for each individual within any given family varies. Individuals who *do not accept,* in varying degrees, the cognitive conditioning of the Modesty Code schema are quite cognizant that those family members who do accept and adhere are locked into a mindset that holds them 'captive' that they themselves do not partake in. Examples of how they deal with this situation are illustrated by the following:

> Their mind is stuck in tradition and religion. They will never change. They cannot see any other way. They get angry at anyone who is different and try to stop them. We are always guarded in front of them. We do not tell them anything we think and are doing.
>
> Because their mind is 'locked' you have to be careful around them. Don't tell them anything. They use every little piece of information against you after twisting it. You have to keep your actions quiet and secret.
>
> Her mentality is 'Upper Egypt', she sees a kiss on tv and she tells us that this is only on tv, its not in real life. Everything with 'D' is 'eyb', 'eyb', 'eyb'. It is the 'Upper Egyptian mentality, she has 'Upper Egypt mentality'. She is 'old-fashioned'. Her mind is 'Upper Egypt'. No one likes her around. She ruins the mood and any fun. To her, everything is 'eyb'. A lot of our time is spent on constantly having to fight the lies she tells our parents about us. She watches every little thing we do and then lies to our parents who believe her. She causes fighting all the time in our family. She is jealous of our freedom. So we keep things secret.
>
> 'F' is driving us crazy. She is so 'eyb' this and 'eyb' that. When she is with us everything is dampened, no one can be themselves. This is because she married when she was 16 and her husband is much older than her. She has a 'traditional' mindset. You cannot tell what you really think or feel or do in front of her or she will use it against you.

It was commonly remarked by females who do resist the cognitive conditioning of the Modesty Code schema (in various degrees) with respect to those females who do not, that:

> they will always find something to criticize about someone else even when its good.
>
> they are envious and jealous. They criticize those who are actively leading their lives while they wish they were doing it themselves and know that they can't.

Moreover, those females who complained the loudest about their 'woeful' situation and condemned the behavior of other females were the ones least likely to take action to alter their situation. They continued the same traditionally encoded and inculcated socialization process with their own children, further perpetuating the conditioning for the next generation and contributing to further stabilization of the Modesty Code representations.

The Modesty Code schema draws on the *endo*-encoded representations with the dichotomous valuation of the female as 'good' (the Madonna) verses 'bad' (the whore, *shamoota*). For those females who have assimilated and accept the Modesty Code schema, the effect of this *endo*-encoded dichotom, is that they tend to bend and twist themselves into human pretzels to adhere to the cultural representations of the schema. The underlying motive for this adherence is to receive the approval and acceptance of others – whether that be their parents, extended family, peers (who have also assimilated and adhere to the program), the community, society, or a combination thereof - but always at the cost of their own authentic inner Self.

Unmarried females confessed on many occasions to feeling considerable anxiety when attempting to decide if some behavior they were contemplating doing would be tagged as *tabu*, and thus they would inevitably be labeled *shamoota*. This anxiety is experienced so often it includes even the innocent and helpful gesture of whether it is acceptable to let a male hold her hand while she crosses the unstable and chaotic streets of Alexandria or Cairo. The concern here is that should anyone who knows the female witness this behavior her reputation would suffer, irrespective of how innocent the behavior was. Consequently, the fear of being labeled *shamoota* entraps many females into willingly adhering to the schema.

This Madonna-whore dichotomization impacts the conceptualization and perception of the sexes for both males and females as the following anecdote illustrates:

> My girlfriend let a guy kiss her. She did not try to stop him. He dumped her because he thinks if she lets me kiss her, she will let other men kiss her. You must never let any man touch you and when they try, you must fight them off because then they will think 'she will never let any man touch her except me if she is my wife'.

Females commonly stated how marriage for a female in Egypt is a "complete risk". For those females who find themselves in marriages that they would rather not be in, the general sentiment expressed was that:

> Because of the traditional system of 'engagement then marriage' that we have here in Egypt its impossible to get to know a man really well. You cannot go out with him or spend time alone together. You do not really know what he is like at all until after you marry him and then it is too late, you are stuck with him.

Moreover, part of the inculcated conditioning transmitted during the socialization process is not to interfere in someone else's marriage:

> No one can help you if you are in a bad marriage. Why would you think that they could?
>
> Others do not interfere in [the] marriage [of another]. They just watch them deteriorate. Why she does not leave the marriage is because it is 'not in the culture'. 'Salvage marriage at all costs'. Her socialization has taught her that it is not even an option. There is nothing you can do if the person wants to stay in the situation she is

> in. She feels it is because of the culture. Who would take her? People would gossip about her, 'she is evil', 'a bad woman', because she did not make her marriage work. Muslim women are better off because they are allowed to divorce. It's sanctioned in their religion. Copts, NO! So instead they stay and keep up appearances for bullshit, instead of leaving.

Yet, all too often this code of non-interference breaks down when the female herself attempts to or does leave her husband. Family members often interfere to persuade the female not to pursue a divorce and to return to her husband irrespective of how abject the relationship may be. The irony of the non-interference code is that in reality, there is a tendency for individuals to gossip and slander that all too often generates devastating consequences on another's life at the drop of a veil.

Domestic violence in Egypt is widespread; not only are husbands violent to wives, but fathers to daughters and brothers to sisters. I spoke with many females and males who are in unhealthy and harmful marriages or family situations where domestic violence occurs. Females consistently stated that one cannot express their real sentiments publicly, "What good would it do" and "There is no one to tell, but even if you find someone, there's no one to protect you if you speak out". In fact, when I asked about females seeking assistance from the police for domestic violence, one male laughed uncontrollably at the naivety of such a suggestion and said, "The police will NOT help a woman". The general sentiment expressed to me by both males and females with respect to domestic violence was that "There is NO ONE to tell". Given that legalities for divorce are framed under religious dictates and provide little leeway for the individual, many believe that divorce is not an option available to them and simply resign themselves saying, 'It is my lot in life'.

Several divorced and widowed urban females, between the ages of 30-50 who are either Muslim Egyptian or had been married to Muslim Egyptians, and whose children adhere to Islam more than they do, reported that their children interfere with them trying to have any kind of a social life that involves males, in particular any attempts on their part to 'date'. For example, one woman, a widow, describes how she has dated a man for five years but only agrees to be seen in public with him at one place as she is "scared to be seen elsewhere because of my son". A divorced Muslim female says, "because my daughter is a 'good Muslim' I do not let her see me dating". Other divorced females complained that it is difficult to develop a relationship because dating is not allowed and so socializing operates on a covert level:

> I do not want an 'affair' like young girls have, I want a committed relationship. But here in Alexandria, normally the guy takes the woman to a flat, screws them, then says to her *'merci, au revoir'*. It is not possible to date because there is only one structure: engaged and marriage.

A prevalent fear, expressed by females of all ages, is that another woman will steal their boyfriend or husband. It never failed to surprise and sadden me that females who had been married for over 40 or 50 years expressed experiencing constant anxiety and fear that their husbands may still divorce them, especially to marry a female who is much younger.

For those urban females who do not accept nor adhere to, in varying degrees, the Modesty Code schema, the conceptualization, perception and attitude that was repeatedly expressed can be summed up in the following statement:

> Just look around you, what do you see? Look how miserable the people are who followed tradition and religious rules and now they are trapped. They can't get out, and they are miserable.

THE MODESTY CODE SCHEMA'S IMPACT ON THE ECONOMIC SECTOR

MALE PERSPECTIVE

The Modesty Code schema includes interpretations that imply no social (unmonitored) and sexual interaction between males and females who are not husband and wife. Thus dating is outside the program. This means that the traditional structure of 'engagement then marriage' is the only acceptable approach for the social interaction between an unmarried male and female. However, many young unmarried lower and middle class males in Egypt cannot become 'engaged' until they have an apartment. The implication here is that if the male does not have an apartment chances are he will not find a woman to marry. Due to the low wages they are unable to afford the high cost of apartments. They stated that in order to earn and save enough money to buy an apartment, they will have to work day and night for many, many years. As a consequence, today in Egypt, men are marrying later in life than was the traditional norm in the past:

> I worked three years day and night to earn money to marry. I drove 1200 miles as a truck driver to a different country and back, no sleep. There is so little chance for so many here.

In the meantime, males are either living at the parental home or homes of relatives. In many cases, they reported that the ambiance of the home life was, generally speaking, "filled with tension", "conflict", "hostilities" and that they had no desire to stay but were unable, financially, to leave:

> I have no money, no job, and I am at the mercy of the tyrant rules in the home. I cannot date because I am not in any position to get engaged to any woman. So my life is very 'hopeless'.

Some felt the probability for them to afford an apartment and thus then be able to marry was highly unlikely:

> I cannot ever afford a flat because first you have to have 30,000 LE for the down payment and then you have to pay 300 LE/month for the rest of your life. I will never be able to marry.
>
> How can I have a girlfriend.Where is the girl! I have no prospects, no money, no flat.

Repeatedly lower and middle class Alexandrian males stated they were unhappy because they recognized that all of their time "is given to working at the cost of my personal life". One group of Egyptian males in their 20's stated:

> We are unhappy because all our time is given to work and we have no personal life.

> I spent 3 ½ years working nonstop and lost all my friends and all the emotional bonding we had. I have no social or emotional life. I don't like it so I have now started to resume my social connections. But it makes me really unhappy inside because I realize that I am having to give all my time to work at the sacrifice of my personal life.

As a consequence of these circumstances, males stated that they were, "depressed", "frustrated", and "angry" because:

> My future in Egypt is bleak.
>
> I feel hopeless of being able to achieve a decent living in Egypt.
>
> I feel burdened with a sense of hopelessness for my future.
>
> I feel sad and hopeless inside when I think of my future in Egypt. What future!
>
> I have problems inside and I am very sad inside. I am worried about my life, the future. I am frustrated. I am deeply sad.

In the end, many of these males conclude that "There are no prospects here for the Egyptian male" and that "This situation will not change here in Egypt in the future". They come to believe that there is only one way out of their situation. "My only hope is to marry a foreign woman, leave Egypt, so I have a chance for a better life. But what foreign woman will marry a man with no money? I have nothing to give her".

For those urban males who did not have to concern themselves with acquiring financial security in order to acquire a wife and live a decent life, their concerns focused on limiting the interaction their wife may have with other males and on that which may take her attention away from the husband, for example, working. As one unmarried, educated, financially stable Muslim Egyptian male in his 30's, stated:

> I will not let my wife work and if she says she wants to work I will not marry her. There are only three reasons a woman should work: 1) its been a dream of hers to do so 2) money and 3) nothing better to do, to amuse herself. I reject the concept completely that it is a dream of hers. I work and make good money so money is not an issue for us. There are lots of other things for a wife to do - like take care of me. It is not fair that I get up early in the morning, work all day, come home exhausted, then ask her to cook for me. Why should she go to work and be hassled by men. You cannot serve two Gods: work and family. Even if I had an American wife she would not work. There is no reason for it.

When I asked 'what if it was a woman's dream? He responded with an emphatic, 'NO!'

FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

The attitude and conditions many unmarried females demand be met by prospective mates have contributed to the feeling of hopelessness that many lower and middle class males experience. It is also a reason why many males want to marry foreign women (discussed elsewhere). In general, many lower and middle class unmarried females stated that they will not marry a man unless he has already acquired an apartment. In fact, their demands do not stop there; they include, "it must be fully furnished". Others demand as being necessary all the latest technological gadgets, "a computer," "a cellular (mobile) telephone", "satellite", "VCR", and "expensive clothes" and "cars", before they will marry.

Repeatedly I was told, "otherwise I will not marry the man". These demands set an almost impossible task for many young males to achieve and hence eliminate them from the potential pool of mate selection.

Given the harsh economic climate in Egypt, many urban lower and middle class females are aware that there is a slim chance of finding a young male who is financially stable. Therefore, if they choose to marry a 'young' male, it may take many years for him to establish himself financially. In the meantime, given the traditional structure of 'engagement then marriage', she is stuck in a limbo state for years while he is trying to acquire a decent job that will enable him to earn enough money to save for an apartment, then furnish it, and then afford the wedding. Her limbo-state-of-engagement means she is now officially off-the-market, so she cannot date any other man. Moreover, she is very much aware of the fact that, quite realistically, it may take 4 to 10 years for the man to be able to get to the stage of actually getting married. The female must decide whether she is willing to wait the time period.

Another factor she must consider and weigh is that during this 'imposed waiting period', she is "getting older". The prevalent fear expressed here is that by the time the male has earned the money he requires, he will no longer want her as she will have aged, and given the importance that Egyptians place on physical appearance, the male will simply choose a much younger female. Consequently, many young unmarried females are encouraged to reject the marriage proposal that carries with it a long engagement because "if another man comes along she cannot see him. She must sit and wait for years. It can easily be 4 to 10 years. This is too long and then there is no guarantee he will still want her. She will be older now."

As stated earlier, a commonly stated perception by both males and females, irrespective of class, is that in general Egyptian females phenotypically age more rapidly when compared to other females. Irrespective of the validity of this statement, it is a commonly stated perception. Egyptian females are perceived to "have physical beauty while in their teen years and it rapidly deteriorates once they get to their 20's and definitely after having given birth to children". Consequently, the age of the female during the engagement process is a consistently mentioned factor not to be taken lightly in the assessment of what to do.

Thus, many lower and middle class unmarried females find themselves in the dilemma of weighing whether to wait many years to marry the young male, or to marry an older male who is already financially stable so there would not be a long engagement period, or to marry a foreigner who may be young and financially stable. In many cases these choices also incorporate the following: the female may love the young male and not love the elder male; the elder male may have a traditional mindset that will restrict the female's life; the foreigner will most likely not have the traditional mindset and her life would be much freer but the foreigner may not be acceptable to her family.

All too often I encountered unmarried females who were determined to marry as a means to get out of a 'bad' home situation and were actively seeking and strategizing to find a male who was the 'best catch' to marry. Many of these females were deliberately choosing to marry males much older than themselves, for their money. In fact, this was a topic commonly discussed in a nonchalant manner. The following is an example of how this kind of strategizing can create unhappiness. A young Filipino Alexandrian female who married a male much older than her relates the following:

> I married my husband for his money. I am not happy. He does not allow me to see or talk with anyone. I have no friends. We have a baby girl one year old who lives with his mother because I do not know how to take care of a baby. I spend most of my time in the house. I sneak out to talk with the neighbors when my husband is at work and they warn me when they see he is coming home so I can run into the house and he does not know I have been out. The community encouraged me to marry him because he is rich. I regret marrying him. Look at my life now! I am only 21 and I am miserable. I do not know how to get out now.

To many unmarried females, employment was viewed as a temporary means to acquire some spending money to purchase desired items until one finds a husband who will then purchase the material goods the female desires. Most stated they had no intention of working after marriage. Moreover, they repeatedly stated that they "want to marry 'big' (a male who is wealthy) and then my life will be set". The general plan heard over and over was "to finish college or university, get a good job, then marry, and once married, no more working and that's it!" They then went on to say that, when married, they would take birth control as they did not want children till they were older and that they only wanted one or two.

There is an awareness at the local level that having many children means a life in poverty. This awareness has also infiltrated into the rural areas and among the Bedouin. In general, individuals stated they did not want more than three children. They look around and see for themselves that families who have a lot of children — fourteen is not an uncommon number — have very little for themselves and can afford to give very little to their children.

THE MODESTY CODE SCHEMA'S IMPACT ON THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

Alexandria, more conservative than Cairo, often called "provincial", is a place that revolves around memberships and connections. Education is not viewed as the means to higher status, upward social mobility, or better job opportunities. Rather, the commonly stated perception is that it is one's social connections that provide the power base.

> One's social connections can outrank one's economic status as well, although of course having money helps considerably.

> Education does not matter in Egypt. It's connections that are important. Life is so corrupt here that everyone knows that it is the connections that get you what you want, not education.
>
> Money is not the top ranking factor here, social connections are. This is the power base, although there is money in Alexandria.
>
> With connections and money a person can buy or buy-off anything they want, to overlook any violation, and so on.

A common perception, attitude, and practice is for the individual to acquire 'any document of certification' from an educational institution, as this is perceived to enable upward social mobility, securing higher status and better job opportunities. This is despite the tacit understanding that the certification is, most likely, a façade presentation. What is sought here, even though there may be no substance behind it, is the title.

Many times Alexandrians had stated that, "My status is high in Egypt but if I emigrate elsewhere my status will be low because I don't have the real qualifications to compete with others". They added that "Life in Egypt is so restrictive that I have to occasionally travel outside to the West to give myself a break from the restrictions, oppression, and corruption in Egypt". Given both the perception and reality for many individuals that social connections are the means to advance in Egypt, there should be no surprise to discover that education is not perceived as 'the answer' to acquiring a better life. A consistent attitude expressed across all socio-economic levels was that education in Egypt is "not taken seriously". In fact, it is perceived, by many, thus:

> Education in Egypt is a joke.
>
> Education in Egypt is non-existent. Its a façade. You buy marks, papers, degrees, and positions. Buy what you want. It's not earned and competence has nothing to do with it. Egypt will never cut it in global competition because how they got their papers wasn't real.
>
> Education in Egypt is a sham. Everybody knows this. Aims are to get a 'paper'. Any paper will do. It gives you a title. But everyone knows there is nothing behind the title because they know how you got it. Everyone does the same.

The following anecdote by one Christian Armenian male, aged 29, was typical of the stories Alexandrians expressed:

> I went to one school and then I realized that 'passing' is based on who you know not what you know. I had long hair, goatee, and was discriminated against, so I quit. I returned the next year and they did the same, so I gave up. Then I went to an Armenian school, then to an Arab college. Now its ok. I chose hotel management for the 'ticket'. You are nothing without a ticket, any ticket. If you have a ticket in Egypt then you are somebody, you are educated. The hotel management ticket is meaningless to me because I have no intention of working in this field. That is not the point. The point is to get any ticket.

A Muslim Egyptian male age 32, states:

> I took the courses to get the ticket. It does not matter that the ticket is unrelated to what I do in my career. The point is to have the ticket, have the paper. I chose the ticket that was the fastest to get, it's only a two year course. You gain status by having any kind of ticket here; it increases your title. Status here is based on who you know not what you know. I will never use that ticket in my career.

This next anecdote is from a Muslim Egyptian male aged 28 who relates how he became certified to teach:

> I teach Social Studies here. I passed the exam totally by luck. It was multiple choice and I guessed on everything. I never studied for any of it and I did not know the material. I couldn't believe it! I passed and now I teach.

This is not just happening at higher levels of education in the public school system but also at the elementary level:

> If you do not pay the teacher bribery money the child will get poor marks and/or fail the grade. If you pay the bribery the teacher gives the child good marks and passes the child. It has nothing to do with the merit of the child.

I had many accounts from males and females, both those still in the school system and those who were no longer in school, who had been physically punished by the teacher. One Egyptian lower socio-economic class urban female relates:

> Teachers do not teach, they just 'sit there'. We say, 'teach us something', the teacher says, 'maybe tomorrow'. In French class, I said, 'I do not understand'. The teacher said, 'Go out, you are bad'. When I was seven years old, the teacher beat me on my hands 50 times. Now I am older and I tell the teacher 'you cannot beat on me'. If you do not pay the teachers, you will get a low mark or no mark. I don't care because I can take the exam for college. Not all teachers are like this, just some.

When I spoke with the parents of this female and asked what action they took with respect to the teachers who use physical violence as punishment, they responded that, "We cannot do anything because it is the same everywhere". One Egyptian Muslim male speaking about the physical abuse in the schools in Egypt stated:

> Those that go to public school are the ones who experience physical abuse. But it does not happen at private schools. The school I went to was free. My father would have killed a teacher if they had 'touched' me in school.

But up until this time I did not have any accounts by teachers who used physical punishment on students and I came across my first account quite by accident. I relate, briefly, the following anecdote. During an Arabic lesson with one of my Arabic tutors, I was asking him about the word 'slowly' (*burawha*).[64] He had misunderstood my question and responded with, "you mean like when we beat a child?" This then prompted the following discussion:

> Question: I heard some teachers hit students sometimes. Do you know anything about this?
>
> Response: Yes, I do this myself.
>
> Question: why?
>
> Response: Because I get angry and frustrated. If I am talking and then a student is talking to another student I get very angry because then the students are not listening to me. So I have to hit them. Our parents hit us, so we must frighten the student through yelling, staring lots, and hitting. It is the only way they will learn. But now the Minister of Education, he is a pediatrician, he has never been a teacher so he does not know about teaching. He is now following the international laws and he said if you hit a student it is illegal, you will go to jail. We are all very very angry about this because now when I hit a student I do so with fear. Fear of him [the student] that he will go to the police and I will go to jail.

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[64] *Burawha* means 'slowly'. It can also mean to hit or slap someone.

> Question: How do parents respond when you hit their child?
>
> Response: I say if I break a student's arm today and you take him to the doctor and fix it, I will break it again. They say, 'you are our brother, and we know you try to teach him, do whatever it takes, if you must, hit him'. We must hit; it is the only way they learn.

For those whose home environment is discordant and harsh, schools are viewed as safe havens in which to escape from the tensions at home. A common sentiment expressed to me by many students who attend public schools is:

> Many people go to college because they are unhappy at home and they just go to get away from family. They go to school to see their friends and be away from their home situation and try to find some happiness. They have no interest in learning anything at the schools. Also, the school hours are 'small'. Any homework that is given is done there because it is 'small'.

Schooling in Egypt is performed in shifts, two shifts in the city, three in the countryside:

> In the countryside there are 3 shifts for school because there are no places and no money and sometimes - how can I say this - no morals. Some people build buildings and they totally collapse within a year or two. There are two shifts in the city.

Consequently, the actual number of hours a student is in school is very small. This in turn reflects on the actual material that is taught, both in terms of the number of different subjects and in the quality of the material, as well as what is learned by the student. In addition, students are off for four months of the year from May to September, further limiting actual learning time. Classes can range from 45 to 65 students per class room:

> Because schooling is done in shifts, there is not enough time to learn much.
>
> The quality of education is poor because the time in school is limited.

This certainly places education in Egypt in a handicapped position in terms of global competitiveness for jobs.

Teachers I interviewed stated that 'critical thinking' is not taught, and that rote learning (banking education) is the methodology commonly used, followed with a never ending stream of examinations to test the memorization of material:

> Education is too goal oriented; there is always a focus on tests. Everything is about tests. Rote learning, then the student is tested on what they retained. It's the same process over and over.

It is not surprising then that I never encountered one individual in Egypt who said that education was the means by which to improve their life. In fact, such a suggestion, was quite literally and consistently, laughed at.

SEX EDUCATION

Sex education is a problematical topic to discuss openly in many Middle Eastern and African countries. In general, sex education in Egypt is basically non-existent because the topic is still viewed as *tabu*, even in formal educational institutions. In Egypt, the educational system operates in shifts, one of several factors that impacts the quality of both the teaching and learning environment. With little time to address core subjects, there is simply no time for a topic that is considered non-essential, not to mention *tabu*. The consistent response I received when I asked about sex education in Egypt was:

> There is no sex education in Egypt - it's non-existent.
>
> It is non-existent. 'It's a mess'. It does not exist in the school system. Parents cannot teach their children; either they are uninformed themselves or are intimidated by the topic.
>
> My mother did not speak to me about sex at all. We learn about sex by watching TV. I was too shy to ask people or speak about it. The only way to learn is by watching and learning that way.

Notice that in the above discussion two of the three responses speak not to schooling, or not only to schooling, but to parents as the teachers when responding to a question about sex education.

I present the above brief description of the economic and educational environment in Egypt so that the reader may be able to better understand why the following perceptions, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors exist.

MARRIAGE, NOT EDUCATION, IS THE PERCEIVED KEY

Both historically and still today, marriage plays a significant role within traditional Middle Eastern culture. Marriage is important to both sexes in Egypt. In general, among unmarried rural and urban females irrespective of socio-economic class, a considerable amount of their energy and time is occupied in some form with thoughts and discussion of finding and keeping a mate and marriage. I would be hard-pressed not to say that for many it was their number one focus of attention. Among both rural and urban female respondents of lower and middle socio-economic class, marriage is still perceived as the most important goal. Among males, although marriage is not 'the' most important goal it is perceived, by many as requisite.

For many unmarried males and females marriage is the consistently stated solution for how to escape from: a tense and conflict-filled parental home; the harsh and corrupt economic realities that abound in Egypt; the endemic ethnic, religious, and class discriminations; and the imposition of antiquated traditional and religious conceptualizations and perceptions etched in codes and laws. Participants in the study and others I spoke with are not saying, 'I want to get educated to get out of the box'; rather, they are saying, 'I want to marry someone who can get me out of the box'.[65] I consistently encountered unmarried males and females who perceive marriage as "the key", "the ticket out", of one's restrictive psycho-social circumstances and personal pain and the means to upward social mobility and economic security. Marriage is the 'hope' which many believe is the means to achieve personal inner happiness and freedom:

> Marriage is the 'way out'.
>
> Marriage is the ticket to freedom.

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[65] "Box" is a colloquial term used by Canadian Arabs to refer to the Modesty Code schema.

I digress momentarily to discuss an important concept, the 'foreigner', 'the stranger'. The specific cognitive conditioning of the Modesty Code schema that is sustained by its accompanying sentinel mechanisms (strategies of enclosure and containment), provides a cognitive and behavioral gestalt of a homogeneous purity model to be adhered to, a model in which purity is based on shared characteristics or 'sameness'. This applies specifically with respect to the social-sexual interaction between males and females. The importance then, of the domains of mate selection and marriage should be quite obvious.

One expression of this cognitively conditioned ideal inner circle of homogenous purity has already been demonstrated in the case of the mate selection criteria categories of blood, ethnicity, religion, and class. Equally, the institution of marriage is still projected to be the only legally and religiously-sanctioned-space where sex between males and females is conceived and perceived as having respect. Thus marriage (in any configuration) is the *endo*-encoded structure for enclosure and containment of the sexual act itself. Not to belabor the point, virginity and its family semblance of cultural representation, is another important domain, and is discussed after the mate selection section.

The Modesty Code schema's principles imply a need to maintain the least amount of exposure possible to difference, to alternatives, to divergence, and to 'the other'. The further away from the projected inner circle of homogeneous purity - the ideal 'reference-point' - the greater the degree of difference expressed and the more alternatives and choice become available. For a schema that has male-female social-sexual interaction at its core, the importance of this should be clear. With respect to mate selection and marriage, then, in general the 'foreigner', or the 'stranger' represents that which is outside the ideal inner circle of homogenous purity.

The 'particulars' that constitute the concept of 'the foreigner' are relative to and dependent upo, the cognitive conditioning that the individual is exposed to throughout an ongoing socialization process that is transmitted from generation to generation and throughout the whole population, that has been cognitively assimilated by the individual, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Given that individuals perceive marriage to be the 'key', the 'way', to get out of 'the box', it should be no surprise, then, to discover that marriage to a foreigner is perceived as the best channel through which to ensure escape. Marriage to a foreigner represents that which is furthest away from the traditional encoded insularity for mate selection and marriage. A foreigner is outside the traditionally imposed mate selection criteria of whom one should marry, whether that be in the categories of blood, ethnicity, religion, class, or any combination thereof. Marriage to a foreigner is perceived as an opportunity to acquire psychological, social, economic, and cultural-environmental freedom, as it represents a pragmatic probability of a mate who does not subscribe to the Modesty Code schema and all the ramifications that implies. Moreover marriage to a foreigner enables the individual to leave the country thereby providing him or her with a "chance to live a better life ... elsewhere". Clearly, then, 'the foreigner' is no longer perceived, by many, as the demonized 'other' (an *endo*-subschema effect) that it has been traditionally conditioned to be. In fact, that perception is in the process of reversing.

I provide a few examples to illustrate how the relativity of the concept of the foreigner is operationalized in the domain of mate selection and marriage. When unmarried Bedouin females express that they "want" or are "hoping for a foreign husband" ,they are not referring to marriage to a 'non-Arab' male, but rather to an Arab male who is "a Lebanese, Syrian, or even an Egyptian" and it is always someone who will "take them away from the desert", hopefully to the city. They expressed the desire "to marry and go to Alexandria or Cairo, but not Libya", knowing that for many Bedouin in Libya, life was harsher, especially for a female. If this ideal cannot be achieved, then the hope is for a Bedouin male who is 'not kin', thus outside the 'blood' criteria, as he is also perceived of as being a 'foreigner' and perhaps he too could take one out of the desert to live in a town or city, especially if he already lives there.

Bedouin females recognize that the only way to leave the desert is to be taken away through marriage. They also recognize that marriage to kin typically does not afford the opportunity to leave the desert unless the male lives in the city, and this is perceived to be a remote possibility. Therefore, in order to leave the desert, marriage must be to either a non-kin Bedouin (outside the 'blood' criteria) or a non-Bedouin but still Arab. Bedouin females do not hope to marry non-Arab males because they know this is still highly unlikely for them; it still resides in the realm of 'inconceivable' for most of them. In other words, marriage to a foreigner who is a non-Arab male is not yet conceivable in the minds of fathers, the decision-makers, and thus by implication not a reality for their daughters yet, although it is now becoming a reality for Bedouin sons. Not only is marriage to a non-Arab viewed as existing outside their real possibilities, even marriage to an Arab who is from outside Egypt is viewed as a dream that will never materialize. When I asked one Bedouin female where her husband will come from, she responded, "I want one from Lebanon, but I know this is a dream that will never happen".

Thus, even for those females who assume that their future husband will be Bedouin, some still want to marry outside the limited parameters of patrilateral parallel-cousin marriage (blood-purity) and hope that the Bedouin male would be from the city and thus take them away from the desert and the traditionally imposed lifeways. The general sentiment unmarried female Bedu echoed was:

> We hope that Bedouin or Egyptian men from the city will 'see' or 'hear of' us and want us as their wife so we can marry and leave the desert.

To the Bedouin male the term foreigner, as interpreted in the domain of mate selection and marriage does incorporate non-Arab females. The general perception of marriage between a Bedouin male and a non-Arab female is not as radical as it is for Bedouin females. There are unmarried Bedouin males who expressed wanting a foreign female as a wife. Most of these males were under age 30. Likewise, there are some fathers who stated they had "no problem" with their sons or nephews marrying a non-Arab female and in fact anticipated that some of them would.

I heard of four marriages between Bedouin males and non-Arab (all four were white European) females in, surprisingly, Siwa, two of which had ended in divorce and two of which still continued. Many Bedouin families stated that having a non-Arab female in the family, especially if she was 'white", brings higher social status to the family; is a means for upward social mobility, would "shine light on the family", and "make the family shine". Although still in the early stages of transformation, the insular mindset of the desert is opening up with respect to mate selection and marriage to 'the foreigner'. Bedouin of the Western desert are not alone in their expressed desires to marry a foreigner as their means of escape. I now turn to the urban sector to illustrate how the relativity of the concept 'foreigner' manifests itself.

To many unmarried Alexandrian females, both Christian and Muslim, marriage is perceived as a *major* life decision with lifetime consequences. They stated they experience "constant anxiety", "fears", and that they are under considerable pressure to choose wisely, as they "do not want to end up in the same situation as other women I know or see all around me". Consequently, "choosing the right man as a husband is a major source of distress".

Many of these females try to weigh whether to set their sights on marrying an Egyptian or a non-Arab male, by assessing their odds of meeting and marrying a foreign (white) male. If they come to the conclusion that the odds are too great for them, they 'resign' themselves to marrying an Egyptian. Their hope then becomes "a husband who will take me away":

> Because my father and brothers beat me, I have 'no hope'. It is only a dream that I will meet an American or Canadian man. In the end I will probably have to marry an Egyptian.

The outcome for this particular female was that she did indeed marry an Egyptian male and move to Cairo.

Other females, also in distressed states because they do not want to marry an Egyptian male and live the lifestyle that Egypt offers, confessed that their concerns lay in 'what will become of (me) by marrying a non-Arab North American male'. The greatest fear is divorce. (This is ironic because divorce is so difficult for a Christian or Muslim female to acquire in Egypt; there is some sense of security here, irrespective of how poor the marriage may be).

> I am so sad inside. I am afraid to marry an Egyptian man because I know what life is like in Egypt and if I have problems I know how to deal with it. But I am scared if I marry an American or a Canadian man, I am afraid, what if he divorces me.
>
> I don't want to live like all the other women I see around me. But I don't know what will happen to me if I marry an American or Canadian or a British man. What if he takes me to America and then divorces me?

This expressed inner conflict is so prevalent that I had countless females tell me they were "always crying inside because I am so sad".

The desire to marry a foreigner was a consistently expressed theme by both males and females of urban sectors of Egypt. Time after time I was informed by Alexandrian and Cairene Egyptians "I do not want to marry my own kind"; "I do not want to marry an Arab"; "I do not want to marry an Egyptian"; again and again they stated they "want to marry a foreigner". Countless unmarried urban males and females stated to me that marriage to a foreigner was their "one big hope", "one big chance in life", "one promise for a better life", "the key to getting a better life". As one unmarried Egyptian Alexandrian female says:

> I have secretly acquired a passport, I want a job to save money, then I can travel. If I marry here in Egypt my life will be narrow. If I marry elsewhere the road is more broad. But I do not know how to meet foreign men, it's so difficult. I have to do it secretly. Even if I meet Egyptian men it's hard and I have to do it quietly.

When they expressed this desire to marry a 'foreigner', they qualified it by stating that they are specifically referring to only certain foreigners, "only an American, Canadian, or British". For example, Alexandrian females (both Egyptian and non-Egyptian) stated that they:

> do not want to marry Egyptian men because they are no good, crazy, suppressive, and beat women. This is why we want foreign husbands, in particular American or Canadian.

These females are not only referring to nationality, a statement of citizenship in a country outside Egypt, but rather they are specifically stating a qualification about the desired phenotypic expression of the individual, that is, 'white'.

A commonly expressed attitude among Alexandrian Muslims both male and female concerning inter-religious marriage is illustrated in the following anecdote. One evening a Christian Egyptian female and I went to dinner at a downtown hotel in Alexandria. The waitress, a Muslim Egyptian female in her early 20's, told us that she wanted to marry an American man. (She is specifically referring to a non-Arab, non-Muslim, white male). The Christian female who was with me said to her "but your family would not approve" (referring to her Islamic religion). The young Muslim woman replied, "He just has to sign a paper saying he is Muslim, but the paper is meaningless". The implication here was that the conversion to Islam is perceived by some as merely a façade and is not considered a hindrance to an exogamous inter-religious marriage.

Urban males frequently conveyed to me that they wanted to marry a Canadian, American, or British wife and wanted to know how to meet one as they perceived this as their vehicle to escape:

> I want a different way of life because my chances for any kind of a decent life in Egypt are slim and marriage to a foreigner is my biggest hope for a means to achieve this.

Repeatedly stated by those males who want to immigrate to the West were the themes "I want to go to America or Canada" and "I want to marry an American or Canadian woman because I know I have no future here". "I want a different life away from traditional expectations, rules, and demands, that are imposed on the people here in Egypt". Both unmarried (Christian and Muslim) including divorced (Muslim) men — I never encountered one divorced Christian — stated that they now rely on using their own criteria for choosing a mate and interacting with females in order to get to know the female more deeply to assess compatibility.

Both urban males and females have become more conscious of the fact that too many who married individuals that parents or other family members had a voice in determining, are disappointed, and full of resentment and regret, and that most cannot get out of their situation. The general sentiment expressed by individuals is that the further away from the traditional insular conditioning and behaviour a person can get, the better. Marriage to a foreigner is perceived to be a vehicle that affords the opportunity to escape from the traditional insularity of the Modesty Code schema. Within the cultural-environment in which this schema has hegemonic control, in this case Egypt, marriage represents a perceived ticket to freedom. These findings are comparable to the Arab-Canadian study.[66] Of further note here is that although these may be the expressed desires and wishes of both males and females in rural and urban areas, it certainly is not an expression of what may actually transpire for the individual in question. There are still many individuals (some urban-based, Bedouin males and females, including those in Siwa and for many individuals in Upper Egypt), that have limited or no say in the decision-making process of mate selection.

VIRGINITY CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

This last subsection discusses just one of the Modesty Code schema's cultural representations, virginity, and illustrates some of the ways in which the interconnective network of interpretive family resemblances in the Modesty Code schema operate. Although virginity is a schema "message" transmitted for both sexes, more in the past than today, in reality, virginity is generally enforced only for females. This is not surprising given that patriarchy is one of the sub-schemas that the Modesty Code schema was built on. In Egypt where the Modesty Code schema holds a cognitive hegemony, females are expected to be virgins when they marry. Female physiological virginity is equated with the purity of never having had a sexual experience, of being untouched by any male except one's husband.

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[66] See Collins, 1996; 1997.

A typical traditional procedure for verifying a virgin bride consists of publicly displaying the blood from the new bride's first sexual contact on her wedding night, usually on a white cloth. Accounts by individuals who lived or currently live, including doctors who currently do or did work in Upper Egypt, stated that the practice of publicly displaying 'the cloth' is no longer practiced.

> Traditionally, it was displayed before the whole village. Today, it is enough to display it to the bride's mother and the bride's mother in law. Two cloths are kept. The bride's mother keeps one for future reference in case her son-inlaw should ever try to claim otherwise, it is a 'copy' for proof. This is still practiced among the *Fellahin*.

However, virginity is not limited in its representation to just a physiological expression. The representation of virgin operates on a number of levels that are interconnected through an interpretive resemblance of ideas and meanings. Thus, it also encompasses representations of the female being 'untouched' and 'unseen' in the sense of 'not seeing' or having 'been seen by *others*'. It also encompasses being 'uninfluenced', with the extended implication that the individual is naive and ignorant, thus easily influenced both cognitively and behaviorally. Therefore, usage of the term virginity encompasses not only a physiological expression but also the idea and meaning of a lack of, or minimum exposure to, and interaction with, *exo* influences, both cognitive and behavioral.

To males who accept, adhere to, and perpetuate the replication of the Modesty Code schema, such virginal qualities were stated to be traits they looked for when assessing a female for mate selection. Many males who stated that they wanted a young female for a wife qualified this by adding, "one who is still a virgin in her mind" and "not one who was educated" because such a woman could be "easily trained and influenced".

When males were asked why they wanted a virgin wife, one educated Egyptian Muslim Alexandrian male, age 31, explains

> We have been told over and over since we were young that before a woman marries she is supposed to be a virgin with her hymen intact. If it is not, that is physical proof she is not a virgin. The male body has no way for physical proof if it has had sex or not. After marriage, a man has no way of knowing if his wife has had sex with another man. Yet if he has sex with another woman she knows. This is fair.

It is interesting that this man notes that after marriage the man and woman are equal in this respect, for neither of their bodies will 'tell' if they have sex with someone else. More importantly, before marriage the intact hymen is used as the reference point to indicate physiological virginity for the female, while males have no such physical counterpart. In fact, an intact hymen does not indicate virginity in all cases.

A Muslim male, part Egyptian, aged 32, educated in the US but working in Egypt as a school teacher, was dating a virgin Muslim female he planned to marry, while at the same time dating several other non-virgin Egyptian females. When asked why he wanted to marry a virgin, he responded that

> It's nice to have virgin wife but it is not necessary. But it is cool! If she is a virgin she is innocent and you can program her.

The first part of his statement refers to the female's physiological virginity, while the second half of the statement refers to her perceived cognitive "virginity". The interpretive semblance of meaning and rationale used here is that if the female is a virgin physiologically, thus naive and inexperienced sexually, she will also be a 'virgin mentally and emotionally', a *tabula rasa*, easily influenced to do whatever the male teaches her to do.

When asked, "why is there the rule of no sex before marriage", males, independent of age, education level, religion, or socio-economic class, in both rural and urban sectors, consistently stated as a rationale, that the rule exists for both sexes so the individual is unable to compare. Males who adhere to the Modesty Code set of interpretations around virginity consistently confessed that they "did not want" a female who has had a sexual experience with any other man because it provided her with the ability to make sexual comparisons. In elaborating their explanations they stated they needed to have a virgin wife otherwise they would then "always be wondering and thinking is she making a comparison (between me and another man)" or, "she will leave if she has sex with another man who she thinks is better; this way she will never know" or "I could not handle if she was making sexual comparisons". Even those males who do not themselves adhere to this behavioral expectation embedded in the schema stated that the same rationale for the rule of 'no sex before marriage' was transmitted to them during their socialization.

> It's for both genders. It's so they will not try something and compare, no comparing. Its a sin! Both genders break the rules. They do not want them to try something that gives them a reference point that they can compare with. If you have sex with a person before marriage and then you marry, they do not want you to be able to know that sex could be better with someone else. To know that you are not getting something you could be getting elsewhere that's better. Both genders break the rules. For example, they do not want them to have a different lover because they do not want them to have any reference point to be able to compare; this would inform them to their own dissatisfaction. This way they will not know they are unhappy, or unfulfilled, or that it could be different.
>
> A virgin has nothing to compare with.
>
> A virgin can be trained and easily influenced to do and believe what you tell her. This way she will never know what she is missing and what she does not have.
>
> How can she know what she does not have or what she is not getting if she does not sleep with another man. A virgin CANNOT know what she is missing.
>
> The reason is that tasting different kinds of sex will make you not stable, your marriage. This is because then you know different things and because of this then you may not accept what you have.

Moreover, respondents stated that being in a position to make sexual comparisons is more difficult for females than for males in some geographic regions than others.

> Both men and women step outside marriage for sex but in Siwa, or any small place, it is very difficult for women to break the rules and have sex with someone other than her husband, or before marriage, because the community is small and closed. Anything that anyone does is seen. It is not possible to get away with anything.[67] It is

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[67] In fact, it is not impossible for females. Many covert strategies are employed even in small rural areas.

> very difficult to do. For men it is easier because they go elsewhere, they travel. They find a woman elsewhere. Women are not free to travel.

Thus, the rule is stated to exist so individuals will be unable to compare and thus evaluate their sexual experiences. This is encoding from the *endo*-subschema as expressed in the Modesty Code schema.

The following excerpts from conversations with doctors illustrate how the individual is 'held by', 'captured by' cultural representations that are unconsciously internalized, in this case, virginity. (In fact it is the Modesty Code schema that the individual is 'held-by', not just one representation that is part of it). Doctors commonly reported that "many times people have knocked on my door in the middle of the night to say that their bride is not a virgin. This becomes a critical point for the doctor":

> A man brought his new bride to me claiming she was not a virgin. Outside the clinic his and her whole family are standing, holding knives. I went to the priest to ask 'what to do', and to ask 'would I be punished if I lie?' The priest said, 'no, if the woman is good, its ok'. He said, 'lie, or the family will destroy the girl'. I went back and said to the husband, 'why did you call all these people here. It is not necessary, her hymen is elastic, when it is elastic it will not bleed'. The husband said, 'Oh sorry', and he hugs his wife. Then he says to me, 'I want blood'. So I cut her and gave him blood.

Another Alexandrian doctor related the following account:

> One day a woman was bought into my office. The woman had had an accident when she was nine years old while playing on steel pipes in which the steel pipes went up into her vagina. It did not break the hymen, so the hymen was not repaired. At the time I advised the father to get a certificate from the hospital to verify this. Years later when the woman was to be married, the father had forgot about the certificate and so he failed to mention this incident to the groom's family. I was called and spoke with the two families explaining the accident had occurred when she was young. The two families began to quarrel. The wedding was 'called off'.

Doctors interviewed repeatedly stated that with respect to the unmarried female being a non-virgin or pregnant, in particular if she was Muslim, that lying was crucial to saving her life and the intactness of the family unit.

> If I do not lie to the Muslim family it will destroy the whole family.
>
> I must lie or they will kill the girl.
>
> You do not tell the Muslim family the truth about the girl. You lie to help to build the family.

The Modesty Code schema comprises a classificatory system composed of interwoven cultural representations wherein all members belong to the same domain and share an interpretive family resemblance. To further illustrate how an interpretive family resemblance in ideas and meaning operates I now discuss female circumcision, hymen reconstruction, and abortion and the interpretive linkage of those representations to the enclosure and containment of purity, virginity, and so on.

FEMALE GENITAL MODIFICATION AND VIRGINITY

My usage of the gloss term 'female genital modification' encompasses clitoridectomy, excision, infibulation and hymen reconstruction. Usage of the term female circumcision, refers specifically to clitoridectomy, excision, and infibulation. My usage of these two gloss terms in this section are for the purpose of distinguishing in the course of discussion between female genital modification that includes or excludes hymen reconstruction.

Female circumcision is one of many culturally conceived and perceived methodologies — that is, sentinel mechanisms — that have become an institution used for protecting and preserving the female's virginity; making it more difficult to access the female sexually by a male other than her husband; and to diminish the females' sexual desire.[68]

My usage of the gloss term 'female circumcision' encompasses all degrees of severity of cut: clitoridectomy, excision, and infibulation. Female circumcision is one of many culturally conceived and perceived methodologies, that is, sentinel mechanisms that have become an institution that are used for protecting and preserving the female's virginity. They make it more difficult for a male other than the husband to access the female sexually and diminish the female's sexual desire.

Despite Egypt's policies that ban female circumcision it continues to operate. However, the numbers of individuals who practice female circumcision and the severity of cut is diminishing. In general, doctors I spoke with in Alexandria stated that the "number of individuals from the educated higher classes who circumcise females is small" in contrast to individuals in "the lower socio-economic classes who were still insisting on it", and "demanding it be performed". "The poor circumcise (wives) when the husband goes away because he is the only one to have sexual relations with his wife."

For those Egyptians who have or continue to perform female circumcision, it is, in general, clitoridectomy.. Doctors I interviewed who had worked in Upper Egypt, reported that female circumcision[69] is still practiced there and that:

> they completely refuse to go with the law. Those who request it are *fellahin* [farmers] and also educated upper classes, or a girl will approach the doctor herself.

In addition, today, female circumcision in Upper Egypt:

> is not done for the same reasons as before. In Upper Egypt, female circumcision is done for cosmetics reasons now and they do it because it 'protects the girl'.

Yet the practice of female circumcision is not limited to Egyptians; there are also Italians, Sudanese, and others, who continue to circumcise. One Alexandrian doctor relates an incident where female circumcision was demanded by a wealthy *Italian* husband who believed his wife's sexual desires were insatiable:

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[68] There are many other functions, beliefs, and reasons for conducting the various forms of female circumcision, specifically clitoridectomy, excision and infibulation.

[69] Usage of the term female circumcision here refers to clitoridectomy and it should be noted that the parallel to male circumcision, which involves excision of foreskin from the penis, inadequately reflects the severity of female circumcision of all types.

> One girl who married a rich Italian, he brought her in and demanded circumcision because he said she wanted sex two, three times a day. He said this in front of many people sitting in the waiting room. The woman consented because he was rich.

One Egyptian doctor, with over 40 years experience in Egypt, relates her own observations:

> I have seen the women from Sudan, Libya, the Gulf, foreign women, and Egyptian women. In Egyptian women the vaginal lips are larger, they have a large clitoris and the flaps hit compared with the other women, but I don't know why. The people believe this creates sexual stimulation and desire for sex. If you just touch it the girl gets excited and wants sex so they trim it for cosmetic reasons. But in Upper Egypt, the girl must still get a clitoridectomy.

She goes on to state that:

> Circumcision does not interfere with sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure depends on whether the man treats the woman good, even a touch of the shoulder can create a response.

What the doctor is referring to here is that some forms of sexual or sensual pleasure and arousal may be available to females even if a clitoris climax is not.

In general, female circumcision in Alexandria is no longer the norm. The doctors I interviewed reported that today in Alexandria "it is now about 30% who ask for circumcision but in Upper Egypt it is still common. It is important for the reader to bear in mind that such statistics are only representative of cases who have gone to a doctor for the practice to be performed and do not reflect those cases where the procedure was carried out by other persons.

HYMEN RECONSTRUCTION AND VIRGINITY

Hymen reconstruction is a physical procedure that sutures together the remnants of the ruptured hymen. It is a procedure resorted to by unmarried females whose hymen is broken in order to maintain a presentation of virginity for their wedding night. Hymen reconstruction is conducted, both by the doctor and for the patient, covertly. In Egypt people refer to hymen reconstruction as cheating, *yaneerish*. In Upper Egypt it is called *targees* - patching. It has also been called *'wish al-bint*', 'the face of the girl', and without it she has no identity. It is a procedure conducted in Egypt on females of all socio-economic classes and many times it is performed more than once for the same female, in-between boyfriends.

Intrusive body modifications such as hymen reconstruction and female genital modification or abortion, can be a lucrative business opportunity that generates large profits for medical and non-medical personnel who conduct them in environments where the Modesty Code schema holds a cognitive hegemony. Knowing the importance that the procedures of hymen reconstruction and abortions can play in saving the life of a female by preventing honor murders and keeping a family intact, the range of motives doctors have for performing such procedures range from altruism and genuinely wanting to help the female, including taking no financial remuneration for their services rendered if the female is poor, to doctors who are 'in it for the money', capitalizing on the desperation of individuals in a seriously dangerous position. One doctor commenting on the different attitudes among doctors related the following:

> A Muslim woman of lower socio-economic class whose hymen was broken, went to a male Muslim doctor who insulted her very badly saying flippantly to her, that she should 'go get the blood of a pigeon'. The blood of the stomach of a pigeon is often used as substitute blood for a girl to present the proof that she is a virgin. There are many doctors here who will not help the girls. They judge her morally and refuse to help her.

One doctor who had worked in Upper Egypt and now had a practice in Alexandria stated to me that:

> If a girl has a broken hymen in Upper Egypt they will kill her; in the modern sector, (Alexandria) the man will take her back to her family and keep the money and it may create a scandal.
>
> If a daughter is pregnant her mother will help her because the husband will blame the wife for the daughter being pregnant, saying 'why haven't you watched our daughter', and if Muslim, will divorce his wife. As a result, there are lots of hymen reconstructions performed.

If a doctor performs hymen reconstruction, or lies to the bride's in-laws claiming she is a virgin when she is not, regardless of whether that is due to the female having had sexual intercourse or losing her virginity from performing a physical activity which broke the hymen, the doctor has saved many lives in the process of performing this lie.

ABORTION AND VIRGINITY

As stated earlier, in environments where the Modesty Code schema has a cognitive hegemony, a pregnant unmarried female is perceived to be the worst transgressor. Being a condition difficult to hide, a pregnant unmarried female sends out a clearly visible sign of her transgression that places her in a very precarious situation in which the punishment suffered can come in varying forms, including death. In many cases, the only option for the pregnant female to survive is to abort the child. Given the nature of the psychological environment generated by the Modesty Code schema in conjunction with the fact that abortion is illegal in Egypt and thus must be sought out and performed covertly, pregnancy among unmarried females is much more common than many would like to admit. As one doctor stated:

> Lots of women in various faculties at colleges and universities become pregnant and would be killed, so they abort. Abortion is illegal, it is all done underground. Doctors will perform abortions up till the female is six months pregnant.

Pregnancy can happen by accident or by design as noted by one doctor:

> A girl can still get pregnant even if there has been no penetration, if semen gets inside. Then she will come for an abortion. What happens in some cases when the father of the girl refuses marriage to the man, the man will deliberately get her pregnant so that they can marry.

One particular doctor's altruism extended to assisting many unmarried pregnant females, many of whom were poor and unable to pay. The following is provided as a typical case in point:

> A poor woman who had no money and was pregnant came to me for assistance. I gave her three pills that are used for liver ulcer problem. After three days, she is in pain, expels the baby, throws it in the garbage and she goes home. I did not charge the woman.

Another doctor well known for performing abortions in Alexandria, stated "if the patient does not have any money to pay for the abortion I will take gold for payment". Other doctors I spoke with viewed this doctor with disdain as his motive for performing the services was for financial gain, either money or gold, and not to help the female.

Doctors I spoke with in Alexandria stated that the socio-economic standing of the unmarried pregnant female's family was irrelevant in how a pregnancy is handled. The determining factor is whether or not the parents are sympathetic to their daughter's situation.

> If the female has sympathetic parents, she may be sent away to deliver the child, then give it to an orphanage, or someone else, and return home afterwards keeping this situation as quiet as possible from anyone else discovering it. The mother tries to help the unmarried daughter who has become pregnant.

But in fact, not all mothers help their daughters. One doctor relates the following:

> In one case one woman who had pain and thought it was her appendix came to see me. She is laying on the table in my office and delivers a baby. Her mother sees this and went out and told the family and cousins. So I called the police to come and take the girl out. I asked the girl, 'who did this to you?' She said, 'it was the man across the street'. The police took her. The police confronted the man and then arrested him. He then divorced his wife and two days later the woman and the baby left the country because they knew they will be killed.

Consequently many females do not even tell their mothers they are pregnant. Doctors recounted incidences where many females tell their families that they are going to the doctor for a stomach ailment or such, when in fact, they go to a sympathetic doctor who will perform the abortion. In fact, one time I was in a doctor's office interviewing a doctor at the same time that an unmarried Egyptian female was laying on the table obtaining an abortion. The girl told me that she was "getting an abortion because if my parents find out they will kill me". In another incident a female told her mother she had to go to the hospital to take medicine for a back problem when in fact she went in, had an abortion, then returned home "as if nothing happened".

On the other hand, financial hardship can push girls into a precarious situation, as one doctor reports:

> Many victims are also the girls who are pretty and come from the villages. Arabs from Saudi, Kuwait, Qatar, give money for the virgin girls for temporary marriage contract, get her pregnant, then do not want her anymore. She goes to a doctor she trusts, aborts the baby, gets a hymen reconstruction so that when she re-marries there is no problem. Otherwise, her new husband will demand his money back and will not want the girl.

Doctor's reported that in Alexandria the incidence of abortion over time has increased by about 20%. In Egypt, the procedures of hymen reconstruction and abortions are a 'catch-22' condition. On the one hand they save the individual's life, while on the other hand they perpetuate the Modesty Code schema.

Virginity cannot be limited to the physiological expression of 'no sexual experience'; nor can it be reduced to one causal explanation such as maintaining a pure bloodline for the purposes of determining paternity. Virginity is a representation composed of a common semblance of ideas and meanings: inclusion, enclosure, containment, sameness, purity, and so on, that are interpretively interwoven with a host of other representations. When operating in the Modesty Code schema it is directed to the specific domain of male-female interaction. Virginity is just one representation of a repertoire of representations existing in the connectionist network of the Modesty Code schema.

SUMMARY

This chapter presented responses from a range of male and female participants that encompassed young and old, unmarried and married individuals of diverse ethnicity, religious beliefs, educational, and socio-economic levels from both rural and urban sectors in Egypt. Findings were grounded in the domains of mate selection, marriage and sexuality, to illustrate what individuals stated to be some of the most central issues of concern that are encoded by and impacted as a result of the Modesty Code schema.

Both sexes in rural and urban sectors share ways in which they are impacted by the Modesty Code schema. Individuals from both urban and rural sectors struggle with many of the same problems, in many cases, the difference being only a matter of the degree of adherence they are forced to acquiesce to. There are also effects that are sex-specific and effects that are unique to the individual. All individuals in Egypt, and any other environment where the Modesty Code schema holds a cognitive hegemony, are impacted in some form.

Among individuals in Egypt there is a gradience that contains a scale of acceptance and adherence (willing and unwilling) to the Modesty Code schema. This was illustrated by the diverse voices grounded in the domains of mate selection, marriage and sexuality. For the most part, both males and females from rural and urban sectors that do not accept (in varying degrees) nor adhere (willingly) to the conditioning of the Modesty Code schema, stated, that "when we look around us we can see for ourselves what following the expected path does to a person and do not want to end up walking down the same road as those all around us."

They spoke of "resenting" the inculcated traditional and religious interpretations transmitted during the socialization process by parents, extended family, tradition and religion, which permeates Egyptian society "dictating and demanding" that the individual "follow these imposed codes and rules". They recognize that the Modesty Code schema leaves little or no decision-making power for the individual. Specific criticisms and objections for example, were levelled against the inculcated conditioning of being unable to be alone with the opposite sex; denial of open dating; of wanting a breakdown of the blood, class, ethnic, and religious conceptualizations of who belongs and who does not, and of who they should and should not socialize with or marry.

Consequently, many asserted that they are not going to be coerced into obeying the traditional, hierarchically ranked and *endo*-encoded antiquated classificatory system (Modesty Code schema) and criteria that imposes what and how they should think, feel, act, and live their lives. They affirmed that it is 'their life', they want to live more liberal lifestyles, and that it is the individual who should be the one doing the evaluating and decision-making of how his or her life should be lived. Both males and females stated that their thoughts are focused on their future and how they can achieve more by stepping outside the pre-conceptualized road set out for them that their parents, tradition, religion and society encourages or pressures them to follow.

CHAPTER 5: TRANSFORMATION AND TRANSMISSION OF THE MODESTY CODE SCHEMA

This chapter is comprised of two sections. The first section discusses how respondents learn the modesty code schema. It also speaks to the encoding process that occurs during socialization. The second section addresses the particular determinants of the stability of the Modesty Code schema.

LEARNING THE MODESTY CODE

The phrase 'Modesty Code' is an 'etic' term, or an "experience-far" term meaning it is a term coined by scholars for analytic purposes, in contrast to an 'emic', or "experience-near" term which refers to the natives' point of view and usage of terms. Thus, respondents in Egypt did not refer to the Modesty Code schema as 'the Modesty Code'. Nor do dictionary definitions of the terms 'modesty' and 'code', capture, in the slightest way, the complexity of the phenomenon, or its specific meanings, usage, and expressions, in the environments where the Modesty Code schema holds a cognitive hegemony.

In Egypt, individuals do not use a specifically coined term to refer to the Modesty Code schema as distinguished from Canadian-Arabs who identify the Modesty Code schema as 'the Box' or the 'doghouse'.[70] Having no gloss term does not imply that individuals in Egypt are unaware of the existence of the Modesty Code schema; it simply means they talk about it in different ways.

Respondents, both males and females, spoke in terms of learning the Modesty Code as a specific '*set* of ideas, meanings, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors' that exclusively clusters around the social *and* sexual interaction of the male and female. Although many recognize that there is a distinct 'set of information', when making reference to this specific set, they simply subsume the set under the cover terms of 'tradition' or 'religion'.

Respondents stated that this Modesty Code content is transmitted by parents and extended family during the socialization process. More precisely, it is cognitively conditioned through inculcation at a detail and nuance level and is a schema that they are 'born and socialized into'.

> It's all we know. Its been there since the day we were born. Our parents have told us these things everyday since the day we are born.
>
> It's what the parents 'tell' us, over and over; it's drilled into us when we are growing up.
>
> Parents say it day after day when you are growing up. It's all you hear until its penetrates inside you.

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[70] See Collins 1996, 1997.

> Our parents teach us through the details, the nuances. We learn by the details, behavior details, mind details, the behavior nuances, *'eyb*, gestures, laughter, dominance in conversation, the little nuances.
>
> Women are socialized from when they are a child into pre-adolescence until they are married. It is then carried on by the husband.
>
> It is taught through the details and its variations, the ideas and behaviors and values. It is pounded into us every day when we are young, 'the mind part' is the socialization process, it is so embedded.

Females further added that the Modesty Code content transmitted by parents, especially the mother, increases in its 'barrage' during the period of adolescence and continues until they are married.

> During the adolescence period, parents,especially the mom, repeatedly says 'do not let any man touch you or you will get pregnant'. If your periods are late you have accusations from her. 'Did you sleep with this person?' when you do not even know how to do it. 'Did anyone do anything to you? Your father will kill you if you ever slept somewhere'. It is constantly reinforced by the mother. It's demeaning; they track your menstrual cycles. The dad will not let you go anywhere.

Fathers tend to blame the mothers when their daughters follow behaviour that is outside the frame provided by the Modesty Code schema. Consequently, many mothers, out of fear of experiencing judgment, blame, and shame from their husband and the community, increase their vigilance and enforcement of adherence to the behavioral codes of the schema.

> Mothers reinforce it over and over. They are like on 24 hour guard watch.
>
> Mothers are the worst! They are so into 'patriarchy'. Because they fear loss of face in front of the community because they will be blamed if the codes are broken. The mom is always blamed. The mom carries the responsibilities if the daughter does something, the mom is always blamed.

In addition to recognizing that a process of inculcation of specific information is being transmitted during the socialization process, there were many respondents both male and female from rural and urban sectors, who also recognize that there is a negative valuation attached to much of this information. These inculcated messages with their attached negative valuation, impact the individual's conceptualization and perceptions of reality.

> Most of what our parents tell us is always something that is bad, wrong, a sin, *haram*, and they tell this to you everyday.
>
> Parents always have a suspicious and distrustful mind toward their daughters. Their [parents and extended family] attention is on these details searching for information.
>
> Cross your legs when you sit, don't laugh loudly, don't hold hands with a guy, don't be alone with a guy, don't let a guy touch you, you must be a virgin or you will never get married, no one will want you, it's always negative, they say it over and over when we are kids, teenagers, and up till the day we are married, this is *haram*, this is bad, this is a sin.
>
> You go out with a friend and you face interrogation when you return. 'Did anyone do anything to you? Did anyone touch you? There is always suspicion in their thinking.
>
> Do not let any man touch you or you will not marry. He will not marry you. The goal is always marriage. To be good how they teach you to be, you have to be a statue of stone with no life inside.

> You're unattractive. Your cousin is more attractive than you; no one will ever marry you. You think you are pretty, you are not. No one will ever marry you. They make you feel bad inside about yourself.

It was observed time after time in both the Western desert and in Alexandria and surrounding rural areas, as well as being a consistent complaint stated by many unmarried Alexandrian Christian and Muslim females, that mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and older female cousins, emphasize obedience, conformity, and the most shallow aspects of femininity for the female.[71] They also noted that they had not been educated with respect to any physiological workings of their bodies. For example, a group of unmarried Christian and Muslim females aged 19-23 stated they had no idea that a female stopped menstruating when she was pregnant until I had informed them of this. Invariably females stated they were not told about menstruation by their mothers.[72]

Not only is there a lack of physiological information transmitted but there is also a complete absence of sex education in any form, including social and sexual interaction between the sexes. Many males and females from the lower and middle socio-economic classes confessed to being uninformed about how to interact with the opposite sex, not only when a more intimate relationship was desired - but even on a platonic social level. Many nights were spent discussing male-female social interaction and courtship behavior.

Respondents stated that the inculcated information transmitted by the family generally focuses on a prescriptive set of behavioral rules for both sexes, based on the beliefs, values, and attitudes their parents and extended family hold, which are based on traditional and/or religious beliefs, values, and attitudes.

Both sexes consistently complained that their "parents have a paranoia about virginity" and of the unmarried female becoming pregnant, that diverts all of their energy and focus to ensure the two sexes are kept separate. They add that both their parents and Egyptian society are so focused on transmitting 'Modesty Code content' that it is at the expense of teaching any "useful" or "practical skills", and that they "do not receive practical information for dealing with life", especially for today's world.

> I never learned any realistic or pragmatic information to use in my life from my parents. They are stuck in a traditional and religious mindset. They can't see outside of it. It's the same for my friends and their parents.

As a consequence of the lack of informed social-sexual information transmitted by both the formal educational system and the informal transmission of information by parents and family members during the socialization process, both sexes stated that they learn most of what they know about male-female social behavior and related information by imitating others. Imitation is a ubiquitous force in Egypt that plays an enormous role in the process of replication and transmission of information.

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[71] Bauer (1985) mentions the same findings.

[72] There were comparable findings in the Arab-Canadian study by Collins 1996.

> People copy the person who is the most popular. Even if they do not like that woman or they are jealous of her, they will copy her because she is the most popular and she is getting all the men so she must be doing something that is successful and right, so they will copy her.

Respondents also stated that they learn through watching television and use it as a source of reference and a guideline for learning not only how to interact with the opposite sex, but also to make more informed decisions that are based on information that lies outside the limited traditional and religious conditioning that is transmitted to them during the socialization process in Egypt.

> No, my mom and dad do not talk to me about sex. I learn sex from TV.
>
> I learned how to behave with girls from watching TV.
>
> There is no one to ask questions to about dating or marriage or sex or what to do or how to do it. The only place to get it from is TV. Parents will NOT talk about these things and there is no sex education in Egypt. So we watch TV and copy what we see from there.
>
> I learned what to do from watching TV. Parents in Egypt do not speak about men and women socializing together. NEVER! You have to get it from TV or watch what your friends do or other people you see and copy what they do.

In fact, both rural and urban individuals stated that they turn to their peers, and to television, satellite, and where accessible, the internet, as a source to guide them. Individuals from both rural and urban sectors also expressed confusion by the contradictions they observe between what is depicted on television and what they are told and see around them in Egypt. I was continually asked "is TV true or not?" and over 90% of these conversations always had to do with male/female social and/or sexual interaction. The following example illustrates the reflective and critical evaluation process that is occurring among individuals in Egypt, including in the Western desert. One Bedouin male asked me "why on TV if a white woman says 'no' she will not have sex with a man she is a bitch but if an Arab woman says 'no' why is she not a bitch?"

Information transmitted via the mediums of television, satellite, internet, and through the "horizontal" transmission by peers and 'outsiders', fills-in the huge information gap in Egypt with respect to social and sexual interaction between the sexes. In other words, interaction with *exo* sources (in many forms, such as personal interaction or through media) of information - that which is outside the Modesty Code schema - is what is being actively sought out by individuals in Egypt who do not accept nor wish to adhere to the Modesty Code schema.

BOUNDARIES

Respondents also speak of being taught boundaries that are not to be crossed. The ubiquitous expressions of '*haram*' among Muslims, or 'forbidden' among Christians, are the terms used by individuals in Egypt to refer to the boundary markers - the *tabus* which mark the parameters of the Modesty Code schema. Respondents speak of the parental and extended family's concerns for any family member whose behavior is outside the perceived boundaries of the schema, as they fear that their behavior would also reflect on the family and that repercussions in some form would be forthcoming.

> You can't date this person because she's lower class, or you can't date this woman because she's a different religion, or that one is too dark; the list is endless. There are boundaries you can't cross everywhere you turn.
>
> Parents telling us who you can and cannot marry and it has to be within this particular [set of] criteria which is usually quite limited, and anything outside these criteria is *haram*; it's 'stepping over the line'.
>
> My dad does not let me go anywhere. My sister and I are not allowed to date. There are endless lists of things which he says are *haram* that we can't do or places we can't go. What we live in is 'small' and 'narrow'. We are so restricted we are choking.
>
> I am not allowed to go beyond this point or that point because it is *haram*, it's a sin. Don't cross this or that line. It's all you hear when you are growing up and it doesn't change when you've grown up either.
>
> I don't care about all the rules that say we can't do this or that, and don't cross this line or that line. I do it secretly anyway. If you listen to all the rules of what you can't do there is nothing left you can do. The person isn't even allowed to make any decisions for themselves.

When probed to define who or what forbids the action and defines the demarcation line, religion is the primary response provided by both Christians and Muslims.

> I cannot go to the places my friends go to. I can't even go out with my friends at night. I can't date. I can't wear those clothes. All I ever get when I ask why is, 'it is forbidden', it would bring shame; the church says so.
>
> It's Islam that teaches us what we can or can't do. That's what sets the rules of what is *halal* or *haram*, of where to draw the lines.

As my Bedouin host so astutely pointed out:

> Before Muhammed, Bedouin used to dance together, drink together, go to weddings together.

CONSEQUENCES

One cannot really speak about boundaries without speaking about the consequences for stepping over the boundaries; the two are always connected with one another. Respondents articulate the consequences that they, or someone they know has, or would, suffer for crossing over the imposed boundaries of the Modesty Code schema, and the rippling impact that those consequences have had or would have in all aspects of their life.

A common complaint stated by individuals who *do not* accept nor adhere, in varying degrees, to the Modesty Code schema, is the obsessive focus that parents and extended family display concerning any family members whose behavior steps outside the boundaries, and the constant negative responses an individual receives from those individuals that do accept and adhere to the schema.

For those family members that *do* accept and adhere to the Modesty Code schema, the fear is that repercussions in some form would be forthcoming to the family as a whole thus damaging the family's reputation with shame. This fear of 'losing face' (shame) in front of the community is always present in the minds of many Egyptians as well as many other residents of Egypt.[73] Consequently, people live in a state of constantly monitoring and being monitored by others in which there is an awareness that every little detail is being scrutinized, generating an ambiance of suspicion and distrust.

> It doesn't matter what is going on in your mind, you have to worry about what is going in the other guy's mind and how he is going to respond to something you do, or say, or wear.
>
> It doesn't matter if a woman wears a short dress or is veiled from head to toe with only her eyes showing, she will be harassed, the men are going to say something to her. I just ignore it. When some people see a guy and a girl together they assume they are having sex so they call the girl bad, then spread this gossip to everyone even when they did nothing.
>
> If you wear western clothes, bare arms, you will be harassed, touched, spit at, etc.

Unmarried Alexandrian female respondents would consistently provide examples of how, every day, they had to justify a word used or an action taken that had resulted in a sister or brother accusing them of 'forbidden' (Christian) or *'haram'* (Muslim) behavior, and thus behavior 'outside the Modesty Code schema. For example, the following incident was related to me by a 19 year old Egyptian female in a state of complete frustration. It is typical of the accounts I was told time after time by unmarried urban females, especially among those whose parents or other family members maintained a strict adherence to traditions and religious edicts that made up the Modesty Code:

> I put some perfume on and left the house. I was several blocks from home already when my father had run all the way to catch me. He grabbed me by the arm so hard that he swung my whole body around. He started screaming in a really loud voice at me and everyone was watching. He wanted to know where I was going and who I was going to meet because I had put on perfume. I tried to tell him over and over again that I was not meeting any guy at all. I just put the perfume on to cover up body odor. He wouldn't believe me and just kept screaming at me and demanding to know who I was going to meet. He made me come back home with him.

To summarize then, individuals in Egypt are able to articulate that there is a specific set of representations clustered together that specifically pertain to the social *and* sexual interaction between males and females, although they gloss this set under the cover terms of 'tradition' and 'religion'.

They speak about the content of the Modesty Code schema in terms of its *boundaries* that mark the parameters of the Modesty Code schema; the *consequences* for crossing boundaries of the schema and the rippling impact that has or can occur in their lives; and the connections between component parts in the Modesty Code schema. They also recognize that a negative valuation, attitude, and interpretation is attached to, and frames, the Modesty Code representations that are transmitted. Many perceive that these valuations and interpretations also affect the individual psychologically, for instance, generating suspiciousness, distrust, resentment, jealousy, envy, and so on, and that this is transmitted in tandem with the Modesty Code representations during the socialization process. The Modesty Code schema is broadcast through a range of expression by the individual: from nonverbal communication nuances to variations of behavioral details to outright overt behavioral declarations.

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[73] Specifically, this refers to those who accept and adhere to the Modesty Code schema. For those who do not, this is not as great a concern, although they can still face negative consequences from actions they take which are outside the parameters of the schema.

The connectionist network of representations of the Modesty Code schema share an interpretively configured family resemblance of ideas, valuations, beliefs, meanings, attitudes, and behaviors, that cluster around and are interwoven with the social and sexual interaction between the sexes and that function as a gestalt of its own.

SUCCESSFUL STABILIZATION OF THE MODESTY CODE

This second section addresses the relative stabilization of content in the generation of the Modesty Code representations. The chief feature that has enabled the Modesty Code schema to achieve a relatively successful stabilization is that it has a slow rate of transformation. I have identified 10 important factors operating in concert that have contributed to slowing the rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema.

1. AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION

The process of socialization refers to all the activities of families, peer groups, social institutions and other entities within a given social group that enables an individual to learn how to be a member of that group. It includes the processes through which cultural and societal norms and values are transmitted from generation to generation and from person to person outside the family structure. Through socialization individuals are taught not only a cognitive map of their culture, but the cognitive structures through which they perceive and define reality. The initial agents of enculturation are usually family members, in particular parents and caretakers when the child is young. Dawkins (1991)[74] argues that children receiving information transmitted by parents simply believe what they are told and there are good evolutionary reasons for this. He calls it a "programmed-in gullibility". As stated earlier, within the Middle Eastern and African context, the patriarchal family is one of the most central mediums of socialization. A central feature of this socialization process is its insularity. In Egypt, the insularity of socialization from institutions of family, tradition, and religion has further contributed to slowing the rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema.

2. METHODS USED TO SOCIALIZE TO THE SCHEMA: COGNITIVE CONDITIONING

One aspect of the socialization process is cognitive conditioning. Cognitive conditioning uses three methods (banking education, inculcation and coercion) that work in collaboration to facilitate internalization of the cultural representations of the Modesty

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[74] The Dawkins source is unpaginated. It can be found on the internet in a section called The Infected Mind http://cscs.umich.edu/~crshalizi/Dawkins/viruses-of-the-mind.html

Code schema. These methods are used for both imparting specific information and for motivating individuals to implement or act upon that information. I refer to this process as 'cognitive conditioning'.[75] Thus, the second element that contributes to slowing the transformation process of the Modesty Code schema is the set of pedagogical methods used in cognitive conditioning.

BANKING EDUCATION

The pedagogical methodology of 'banking education' advocates rote learning. It is anti-dialogic in its teaching approach and the content is deemed unalterable. The individual ranked to be in the lower position, whether that be by sex, age, ethnicity, religion, education, socio-economic status, and so on, including various combinations thereof, is generally discouraged or prohibited from questioning, criticizing, and acting contrary to the individual in the higher ranked category. The representation *'hierarchical ranking'*, that includes an action element, demands 'compliance to authority', whatever its form: parents, elders, tradition, religion, and so on, and to the information transmissions of authority - irrespective of how ill conceived or unsound either of them may be.

COERCION

Coerce is defined by the Collins English Dictionary (2003) as: to compel or restrain by force or authority without regard to individual wishes or desires.

Coercion, whether by persuasion[76] or force, is another method used to create selected mental representations from information (conceptualizations, perceptions, values, attitudes, preferences and so on) and to ensure compliance to that information, or to the mental and cultural behaviour required in relation to that information.

INCULCATION OF INFORMATION TRANSMITTED

The third method used in the cognitive conditioning of the individual's mind is inculcation, the incessant repetitive transmission of the same message. Public representations of the Modesty Code schema are transmitted daily, especially within the family but also more broadly. It is through the ceaselessness of this influence in the same direction that a gradual and inconspicuous infiltration occurs within the mind of the individual, forming a well worn 'groove in the mind' that directs the individual into a specific conceptualization and perception of reality. Constant repetition through time assures a more complete and enduring cognitive assimilation of the message.

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[75] My usage of the term cognitive conditioning is not limited to persuasive coercion. Persuasive coercion is only one expression of coercion, and coercion is only one method used in conjunction with banking education and inculcation that work in collaboration to internalize the cultural representations of the Modesty Code schema.

[76] In the older academic literature, coercive persuasion was referred to as mind control or brainwashing. Today, in academia, it is known as coercive persuasion. Coercive persuasion, or thought reform, are "effective restraining, impairing, or compelling through the gradual application of psychological forces". http://www.factnet.org/rancho1.htm

The methods of banking education and coercion are derivatives from the core encoding of the patriarchal schema: 'hierarchal ranking of authority' and 'compliance to' that authority. The combined application of all three methodological approaches undermines the individual's critical thinking and evaluative abilities.

3. SELECTIVE INFORMATION: THE MODESTY CODE SCHEMA

The third element that contributes to slowing the rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema is the selectivity of information that is transmitted. Selectively conditioned representations, both mental (ideas, meanings, beliefs, values, attitudes) and public (behaviors, and so on) sharing an interpretive family resemblance, are transmitted through banking education, inculcation and coercion. This selectivity funnels the individual's conceptualizations and perceptions of reality along the desired channels.

4. INTERNALIZATION OF THE MODESTY CODE SCHEMA

The fourth element that contributes to slowing the rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema is the fact that the representations which have been inculcated day after day, facilitated by banking education and coercion, become deeply internalized in the individual. *Internalization* is the "process by which cultural representations have become part of the individual, that is, become part of what is right and true" (D'Andrade (1995: 227). According to Spiro (1987) cited in D'Andrade (1995: 227-228) there are four[77] levels of internalization. It is the fourth and deepest level of internalization that concerns the Modesty Code schema. At this level of internalization the "system of cultural representations is not only internalized, it is highly salient". The "cultural system not only guides but *instigates* action, and the entire system is invested with emotion" (D'Andrade 1995:228).

The Modesty Code schema clearly guides, instigates action, and is invested with emotion and as D'Andrade (1995:228) points out, "emotion has this sort of extra effect on internalization because emotion is a very special kind of informational system". It is "complementary to the cognitive system" and "evolved along with it" (D'Andrade 1992:19-20 cited in D'Andrade 1995: 229). In other words, "emotions and cognitions together form a highly adaptive representational system" (D'Andrade 1992:19-20 cited in D'Andrade 1995: 229). This "cultural shaping of the emotions gives certain cultural representations emotional *force*, in that individuals experience the truth and rightness of certain ideas as emotions *within* themselves - as something internal to themselves" (D'Andrade (1995:229). The individual is "trained to view" as Gerber (1985:153) cited in D'Andrade (1995:228) states, and it is this "training" (in the case of the Modesty Code schema, through the pedagogical methods of banking education, coercion, and the inculcation process) that creates a "*disposition to feel such an act as "natural" seeming to rise out of the very depths of his or her being*".[78]

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[77] See D'Andrade 1995:227-228 for a discussion of Spiro's four levels of internalization.

Furthermore, representations are not entering a empty mind. Rather, they are entering into a mind that has already been shaped by the acquiring of previous representations. Any new information is processed in ways that concur with the compatibility or incompatibility of previously acquired information. And as Sperber (1996:84) so aptly notes, "previously internalized representations are a key factor in one's susceptibility to new representations".

This can easily be observed with the pre-conditioned demonization that primes the individual so that if and when exposure to *exo* influences does occur, disincentive measures have already been set in place that increase the chances that the individual will respond in a certain manner. That is, he or she will respond with suspiciousness and distrustfulness to anything that represents difference, divergence, alternatives, change, the 'Other'. The *endo*-encoded prejudices against differences are deeply rooted in Egypt.

Additionally, with reference to connectionist schemas, as Hutchins (1991) cited in D'Andrade (1995:142) states "one can create networks which form *preemptive* and *coercive* schemas, just as one can create networks which form flexible and accommodating schemas". Norman (1986) also cited in D' Andrade (1995:142) emphasizes that schemas can express "flexibility" and "plasticity" but equally connectionist networks can be constructed that are "very inflexible and rigid". The Modesty Code connectionist network of representations is a very inflexible and rigid (coercive) schema.

This cognitive schema has an automatic controlling influence on the individual. It is for many, rarely perceived, critically questioned, or evaluated - it is as hard to see as the air one breathes. In this sense, one can say that the individual does not merely 'hold' a conceptualization of the Modesty Code schema, but rather, is unconsciously "held by" the Modesty Code schema. It is a schema that is not only acting or 'running' in the individual, one might say, it is 'running the individual'. The individual cognitive structures promote insularity, reducing the possibility of change or transformation.

It is generally difficult for the individual to detect when he or she is being 'held by' certain representations that have been deeply internalized and are, in fact, controlling the individual. Dawkins (1991) calling them 'viruses', aptly says "chances are that you won't know it, and may even vigorously deny it". Nevertheless, there are tell-tale signs that one can observe. The typical expression is best summed up by Dawkins (1991) who states, the individual is:

> ... impelled by some deep, inner conviction that something is true, or right, or virtuous: a conviction that doesn't seem to owe anything to evidence or reason, but

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[78] Italics are the author's.

> which nevertheless, he feels as totally compelling and convincing. We ... refer to such a belief as "faith".

Because the Modesty Code schema is the sole reference grid, the sole set of mental representations that frame reality for individuals who have internalized it, many feel hostile towards different forms of conceptualization and perception of reality that are contrary to the Modesty Code schema's configuration. Attempts to create an altered pathway of conceptualization and perception that challenges this reality-grid, is perceived and experienced as deeply threatening and invokes intense defensive emotional reactions.

To illustrate, I return to an earlier example used in chapter four. It was demonstrated that to some Christians in Egypt it is not only forbidden to marry outside one's religion (or in the case for Muslims only under the conditions of converting the 'Other') but forbidden even to marry an individual within the same religion but of a different sect, such as Greek Orthodox and Catholic. This was perceived as so "impossible" (unless conversion of the 'Other' occurs) that the mere suggestion of doing so evoked such an automatic and intensely emotional negative reaction, that one would think immediately of Dawkins' viruses, with reference to cognitions, or the more standard notion of psychological defense mechanisms.

This automatic, unthinking, and intense, usually negative, emotional reaction was consistently observed to be expressed by individuals who are unconsciously 'held by' the Modesty Code schema when:

- challenged to let go of any aspect of the Modesty Code schema. or
- the validity of the authority of the Modesty Code representations were questioned;

and towards:

- representations outside the Modesty Code reality construct;
- individuals who espoused a different conceptualization and perception of reality.

However, this was by no means the only form of expression. The internalization of the inflexible, rigid, and coercive Modesty Code schema can be observed in both the individual who is adamantly demanding (sometimes in a compelling and emotionally charged manner) and in the individual who is emotionally detached, rigid, and 'cold as ice', both insisting that:

- the sexes be segregated; or,
- that an unmarried female be a virgin at marriage and that virginity testing be conducted, or at least that blood be spilled on the wedding night as evidence of her virginity; or,
- that honor murder be enacted because of a perceived or actual transgression of what constitutes an illicit interaction with a male, or,
- that honor murder be enacted if a female has been raped.

In addition, the existence of Modesty patrols in Israel and Morality squads (*mutawa*[79] - religious police) in Saudi Arabia that are set-up to reinforce adherence to the Modesty Code schema are further examples of being 'held by' the Modesty Code schema.

This process of continuous exposure to, and inculcation of, selective representations, forms a codified insular conceptualization of reality that becomes deeply internalized in individuals who have assimilated and accepted it. This conception of reality is also reflected in the social and cultural environments that hold the Modesty Code schema as a cognitive hegemony, further contributing to their replication and the stabilization of the schema as a whole.

5. PEER PRESSURE

The fifth element that contributes to slowing the rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema is peer pressure. Any individual can be exposed to and experience peer pressure: the pressure to conform one's thinking and behavior to that of the group. Any cohort: sex, age, family, friends, community, ethnicity, religious, class, and so on, can generate peer pressure. The better the individual is at conforming to the consensus reality the more rewards they derive from the group in question, even if that only manifests as 'less harassment'. Not to adapt to this conformity is to risk silent ostracism or worse, being perceived as a rebel within the community. Individuals who think for themselves, especially those whose innovation and creativity lies outside-the-schema are perceived as a threat and considered dangerous.

6) RELIGION IN RELATION TO THE MODESTY CODE SCHEMA

The sixth factor that contributes to slowing the rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema is religion, in particular, western religion (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). A common trait of the Arab stereotype as noted by Collins (1996); Patai (1983:106); and Wikan (1984) is their "other-determined" and "other-oriented" character. There is the tendency for the Arab individual's focus to be directed to the approval of others, (parental, peer, societal, religious, and so on) and saving face among these.

The epitome of this 'other-determined' and 'other-oriented' character is expressed in the individual's relationship to religion. Both Christians and Muslims in Egypt recognize that much of the Modesty Code schema's content transmitted to them by family is derived from religion which in turn is dependent upon a feedback loop of the family's continued replication and transmission of this specific information. Participants, and others spoken with, commonly stated that that they "give the 'final say' to their father" and "he gives his final say to religion". Religion is the 'Other' that many individuals in Egypt perceive as holding what Dawkins (1991) articulates as, "some infallible authority [that] compels them to accept". Consequently, this has impacted the individual's perception of their ability to act. Instead of exercising choice at various points, they perceived that they walked a road predetermined by God/Allah, and thus it was an irrefutably determined course of action impossible to change, hence inevitable and "meant to be".

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[79] *Mutawa* are agents of the 'Committee to Prevent Vice and Promote Virtue' that is funded by the Saudi government and headed by a cabinet minister. The *Mutawa* reportedly receive about $300 for every Saudi they arrest and $150 for every foreigner.

Persuading continued adherence from people who subscribe to the tenets of the Modesty Code schema's conceptualizations and perceptions of reality stand a better chance of assimilation and continued replication when the representations are linked with religion. This is a powerful set of supporting representations activated almost as defense mechanisms in relation to the Modesty Code schema. A salient point to be noted here stated by Dawkins (1991) is

> If you have a faith, it is statistically overwhelmingly likely that it is the same faith as your parents, and grandparents. But by far the most important variable determining your religion is the accident of birth. The convictions that you so passionately believe would have been a completely different, and largely contradictory, set of convictions, if only you had happened to be born in a different place. (That is to say, faith is a result of) epidemiology, not evidence.

RELIGION AND DIVORCE

Although this section addresses factors that contribute to the stability of the Modesty Code schema both as a cognitive phenomenon and a set of cultural practices, it should already be evident that some of these same factors may carry significant indicators of impending change, instability. One exemplar of the role of religion in Egypt is seen with respect to divorce, where marriage legalities are rooted in religion.

Every Christian I spoke with in Egypt (excluding Christian expatriates) stated that once you marry there is "no way out", "you are stuck for life", "there is nothing a person can do, you are 'trapped for life'". Many Christians expressed resentment and anger at the rigid and narrowly scripted criteria, controlled by Christianity, that would enable a divorce. They perceive it to be the cause of much distress and unhappiness because it leaves little or no room for divorce.

> Once you marry there is no divorcing; you are stuck with that person for life. Even if you move and leave that person you are still their wife or they your husband.
>
> If you do not love the person you marry, the father of the church will convince them to stay anyways because they say, 'it is no good to leave and God does not like you to go'. You are forced to go back into the marriage and are not able to leave.
>
> Once you make your decision of who you marry, you are married for life, no matter how bad the marriage is.

Married Muslim females also expressed anger at the fact that the legal system's divorce laws are based in religion, Islam, and that a divorce is very difficult for them to obtain. On January 27, 2000, President Mubarak proposed legislation that parliament voted to accept, facilitating the process of divorce for Muslim females, by giving them the ability to divorce their husbands without having to provide proof to judges that they have been mistreated. This legal change may change the situation for these married Muslim women, but only time will tell.

My findings would suggest support for Hoodfar (1999:54) who implies that marriage is a relatively stable institution in Egypt as there is a low incidence of divorce, especially after children are born. However, the reasons for that stability suggest a much different picture of married life than Hoodfar might imply. There are many undocumented cases of individuals who are married and stay together not because it is what they want to do, but rather, because religion thwarts the individual, in particular Muslim females and all Christians, from acquiring a divorce without experiencing serious challenges, many that are insurmountable.

Consequently, for Christians and Muslim females in Egypt, *carefully selecting* one's mate becomes a decision-making process that carries enormous weight, so much weight, that unmarried males and females expressed experiencing considerable distress.

> What to do? Marry or not marry? If I marry and it is no good you are stuck for life.

They realize their choice of 'who to marry' is a decision that will impact them for life and that they must live with no matter how wrong it turns out to be. They wonder if they should even marry, and if they do, many expressed wanting to marry an individual from outside Egypt. All of this suggests significant pressures on the Modesty Code schema constraints in the area of marriage, and perhaps through marriage, in the area of religion. Thus although religious beliefs seem to be a significant 'stabilizing' force for Modesty Code schema behaviour, many destabilizing elements, elements that point to transformation, seem to cluster around marriage.

7. THE ROLE OF FEAR IN THE CULTURE OF SILENCE

In Egypt, the individual has learned through direct instruction, observation, personal experience, and gradual absorption of a tacit understanding that "it does no good" or "brings harm" to the individual who "speaks out". Many respondents repeatedly stated that the individual who "speaks out" and is not backed by consensus "would be alone without support and would be too easily silenced" and "There's no one to protect you if you speak out".

The inculcated conditioning that the individual must, if not accept, at least adhere to authority, generates a fear to openly oppose authority (in its many forms) or to oppose the information transmitted by authority. Fear performs a driving-force role in the individual's adherence to the Modesty Code schema. Even when an individual really wants to step out of the constraints set by the Modesty Code, fear that retribution in some form and degree will be suffered, especially if the infraction is publicly exposed, prohibits many individuals from doing so. Consequently, there is a tendency to wait for a consensus of voices to be expressed publicly about change, or to wait for change to be initiated by an individual who is highly respected and perceived as a role model. Only then may change be perceived as being more acceptable and as 'safe to follow', especially when it concerns operating 'outside the schema'. This further contributes to slowing the rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema and its stabilization.

8. CULTURE OF SECRECY: Sirr

In Egypt, individuals are not offered a choice of whether or not they wish to accept the Modesty Code schema. Rather, as demonstrated earlier, if you are in a particular environment in which the Modesty Code schema has a cognitive hegemony, the expectation for adherence is imposed (in varying degrees) on the individual, and that individual is impacted in some form. No matter how far outside the Modesty Code schema one's own particular conceptualization of reality may be, it does not provide exemption from adhering to at least some of the prescriptions of the Modesty Code schema, once one enters the designated 'geographic cultural space'.

Individuals who have assimilated and internalized the Modesty Code schema in various degrees perceive it to be the basis for reality (it is the only reality they know) and accept it as such, and generally do not rebel against the constraints imposed by the schema. On the other hand, those individuals who are living in such an environment, whether by choice or not, who reject various representations that make up the Modesty Code schema, resent its attempts to confine individuals to living out their entire life within this cognitive construct and its public manifestations.

Respondents and others spoken with generally framed this imposition and inculcation as traditional and religious constructions and perceptions of reality that have been imposed and inculcated during the socialization process. These individuals stated that they do not accept the Modesty Code representations and information as they do not coincide with their own conceptualization and perceptions of reality. Specifically they resisted the constraints placed on social and sexual interaction between males and females when expressed outside the 'space' of marriage, both conceptually and behaviorally.

One consequence of this construct is that there are few, or no, public spaces available for the two sexes (excluding a married couple) to interact socially and these public spaces decrease as one goes from the urban to rural areas. In the public spaces that do exist, including many nightclubs, individuals are always being monitored by someone waiting to generate a chain reaction of *fadiiha* (gossip and slander) and the consequences that follow. It should be no surprise, then, that many respondents and others stated that "life in Egypt is simply too restricted and unrealistic to live in", filled with boundaries and consequences for stepping beyond the boundaries, imposed by tradition and religion, and that they "want out!" It was commonly stated, particularly by urban respondents, that 'life in Egypt' is "out of touch with reality" and "respect for the old order is fading fast". For the most part, many individuals keep this perspective hidden, except from select others.

As pointed out earlier, humans are social animals for whom sexual attraction is biologically innate and results in desire to certain individuals, an occurrence that is, and I repeat,, "often unplanned, involuntary, and seemingly uncontrollable" (Fisher 2004: 22). Whether by choice or not, the individual lives in this restrictive and insular cognitive and behavioral cultural environment and is left no choice but to find strategies for functioning and surviving here. Despite the nature of the Modesty Code schema's imposed classificatory system and the psychological and environmental ambiance it has generated, it has also spawned not only a culture of silence, but equally a culture of secrecy - thus generating the very conditions it tries to prevent.

Cloak and dagger strategies abound out of necessity to cope with, and maneuver around, rules and constraints associated with the Modesty Code schema. Other scholars have acknowledged the huge role that secrecy plays in Egypt (Hamady 1960; Mernissi 2001). In fact, Mernissi (2001:3) claims that "the name of the game is *Teqiyeh*, secrecy". The term used in Egypt both in urban and rural areas, was *Sirr*, secret. I observed, and spoke with participants and others in Egypt, concerning a repertoire of diverse, ingenious, and innovative strategies employed to maneuver around and beyond the parameters of the Modesty Code schema.

> All dating is under the table because of the girl's parents. The man says, 'No I can't take her here or there because her parents or someone may see us' so they go to places no one knows. Everything is hidden under the table. Everything is SLY, under the table due to the culture, religion,
>
> I cross the lines but I do it carefully and quietly so as not to draw attention to myself.
>
> Tradition and its rules about men and women – it's not what the people feel inside. So they have to meet in secret. Everybody does this.
>
> We go places but don't let it show publicly. We are silent because of the 'closed-door minds'. There is no other road to walk here in Egypt.
>
> We always find ways to meet secretly. There is no other choice, you have to find a way.

Social interaction is important to humans. In the past, and still today in many cases, the only way for males and females (who are not kin or married to one another) to interact, alone, socially and sexually with one another, is through stealthy behavior. Some males and females will always find ways to meet no matter how potentially dangerous it may be to do so. In fact, the high-level risks that so many are willing to take highlights the great lengths that individuals are willing to go to, to maneuver around and beyond the imposed Modesty Code schema.

In addition, having to operate on a covert level jeopardizes the individual in ways that would not be necessary if males and females were able to simply interact socially in the open. For example, I observed and discussed with many females the potential risks involved when they venture off to secluded areas to be alone with males whom they knew very little about, increasing their potential danger. For young unmarried females who have lived a relatively sheltered life and are naïve due to socialization to the Modesty Code schema, the potential danger is increased. By delegitimizing social interaction between males and females who are not husband and wife, contrary to the rhetoric of protecting the female, it may jeopardize her safety in ways that would not otherwise occur.

9. CLOAKING DEVICE STRATEGIES OF DECEPTION:

A) FAÇADE PRESENTATION OF ADHERENCE

To say that individuals are operating in secrecy and using deception as a tactic would be a major understatement of what is occurring in Egypt and other environments where the Modesty Code schema holds a cognitive hegemony. In order to survive and live in these environments, and be able to circumvent the Modesty Code schema, a highly effective counter strategy is necessary and must be able to meet certain criteria:

- It must be able to be used by any individual.
- It must be able to be drawn-on at a moment's notice, especially when unpredictable events arise, given the psychological ambiance pervading the environment, and severe punishments that the individual could suffer.
- It must achieve its purpose - countering the Modesty Code schema.
- And most important, it must be as undetectable as possible so as not to alert those who have internalized the Modesty Code schema and expect or demand acceptance by others.

Therefore, the most effective counter-strategy would be one that encompasses an undetectable maneuverability that enables rapid and seamless flexibility and changeability to adapt and flow around restrictions, obstacles, and the unpredictable that may arise spontaneously. Such a specific strategy, "key scenario" or "strategies for action" (Ortner 1973:93) does exist and I have coined the phrase, *façade presentation cloaking* device to speak of it.

The *façade presentation cloaking device* is a highly effective cloaking strategy, and a very old and "serious game" (Ortner 1996) that is being played, wherein the individual employs a *'façade presentation of adherence'* to the Modesty Code schema for self preservation in these Modesty Code schema environments. By presenting a façade of adherence to, and enactment of, the expected traditional and religious behavioral prescriptions, the individual's chances are increased of not raising the suspicions of the ever-watchful eyes of other individuals, thereby deflecting their attention, and enabling the individual to be effectively, 'glossed over'.

In other words, if at surface glance all appears well on the exterior, that is, a presentation of adherence to the consensus reality is perceived, then the individual is enabled to engage, non-detected, in behavior and activity on a covert level outside the Modesty Code schema. This psychological and behavioral shape-shifting cloaks the individual's underlying motives, feelings, values, attitudes, behavior, and so on, that run contrary to the Modesty Code schema.

B) THE MODESTY MASK

The nature of the cloak that is worn in this 'façade presentation of adherence' consists not only of the presentation of adherence to traditional and religious prescriptions but also comprises a *'modesty mask'*. Just as clothing can be used to conceal, in the sense of increasing the individual's chances of being seen as operating normatively at first glance, so too can presenting certain behavior (including stated conceptualizations, perceptions, valuations, and attitudes). The modesty mask is characteristically composed of a repertoire of traits that form a 'modesty persona': a veneer of politeness, honey-worded compliments, modesty, amicableness, eagerness to please, obedience, and virtuousness. These calculated expressions are presented through the manipulation of a number of options: verbal and non-verbal communication — the subtle and deeper levels are conveyed both consciously and unconsciously by nuance — and clothing, to lure the interacting other into a false sense of security, to believing that they are 'with you', and 'on your side'. It is a well established and refined nuanced art-form, a presentation of revealing and concealing. Respondents and others in Egypt know the game well and act to ensure their utmost safety. In fact, it is a highly effective war tactic as it is an unsuspecting and camouflaging sweetener that disarms. Mernissi (2001:11), reporting the same findings, states,

> Growing up I was taught that a woman should lower her gaze, so that men could never know her thoughts. The so-called modesty of the Arab woman is in fact a war tactic.

If, at surface glance, all appears well on the outside then one stands a good chance of not being 'singled out', of not having drawn attention to oneself, and thus being overlooked. As a result, in general, the unsuspecting observer sees only a presentation of the modesty mask, the cloak of adherence, a seductive and un-alarming persona, hence less scrutiny is applied as 'all appears well on the surface'. The individual has been effectively camouflaged and enabled to act on a covert level undetected.

But to those who know the game, there is also the awareness that the presentation in no way reflects the underlying reality and that the outer presentation stands a very good chance of being false. Hence many people simplly do not take seriously the outer façade presented. This strategy also enables the individual to evade real commitment. One can see this most clearly in Egyptian etiquette behavior where an individual may have no intention of following through on promises made.

Both the facade presentation and the awareness of this presentation is ubiquitous in Egypt. It can be observed to be operating at numerous levels, whether that be the level of physical adornment to attract a suitor; as displays of adoration and admiration that have nothing behind them; as presenting oneself as affluent when not; or presenting a military prowess through a fresh paint job of a ship detracting inspectors from looking closer to see that the ship is not mechanically functional. It seems that the Modesty Code schema reflects a more encompassing complex of values in which image and presentation have priority over substance.

The irony of the success of this strategy is that there is an awareness that people in Egypt, generally, do not look under the surface, despite the fact it is a ubiquitous and well understood strategy. I consistently observed individuals who were deceived time and time again, and discussed with a number of individuals how they were 'taken-in' by the presentation and did not bother to look beyond the façade, despite knowing this is such a ubiquitous strategy employed in Egypt. The weakness here is that they themselves do not go beyond the surface glance - exactly what most people count on happening.

To an insightful and perceptive eye, one can observe an exaggerated quality of the trait(s) expressed in this repertoire of impressive manners, amiableness, pleasant language usage, feigned modesty; one is able to observe and understand the tacit communication transmitted, the non-verbal communication; and, perceive the underlying ingenuousness that emanates through the façade presentation. Moreover, individual skills and ability at playing the 'façade presentation of adherence' game varies. Arrogance, sloppiness, non-verbal communication, and so on sometimes expose the individual's underlying motives.

Just as infibulation (the severest form of cut in female circumcision), is the epitome of the *endo subschema* for enclosure and containment by suturing the female's vagina shut,[80] so too is hymen reconstruction, as a cloaking device, the epitome of the *façade presentation of adherence* to the Modesty Code schema.

For many unmarried females, whether they accept the Modesty Code schema or not, the cognitively conditioned demand for virginity as a public representation of untainted purity is so internalized in Egypt's cultural-environment, that the potential risk of retribution to a non-virgin bride (such as losing one's potential husband, or one's life) motivates them to carry out the façade. Many participants and others spoken with stated that they 'know' that many females are not virgins when they marry. "That is not important! What is important is that she present the image of virginity". This is one reason why hymen reconstruction is so widely practiced and can be a lucrative business.

What are the roots of the façade presentation? Just as the venom extracted from a snake is used to produce the antidote for the snake-bite, so too do the counter-strategies for surviving and circumventing the cognitively conditioned Modesty Code schema derive from the schema itself. The key to the counterstrategy is the underlying representation of 'compliance to hierarchal ranking of authority' at the core of the patriarchal subschema along with its derivatives, and in conjunction with the experiential realization that in this environment, the appearance of conformity is rewarded. The reward may included the potential to save one's own life, a strong motivation to identify and use such a strategy.

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[80] Excluding a small hole left for the passage of urine and menstrual flow.

The cloaking device of 'façade presentation of adherence' with its accompanying 'modesty mask' is highly-effective on some levels, but a double-edged sword as a survival strategy for individuals who must live in Modesty Code environments. Although this cloaking strategy may enable an individual to escape on one level - it can, and does, save the lives of individuals - on another level, it does not enable an individual to escape from having to present a façade of adherence.

The pervasive encouragement and endorsement of the use of a façade presentation strategy does not facilitate openly dealing with the underlying cognitive conditioning, and its impact, which contributes to the culture of silence and culture of secrecy. In this sense there is a feedback loop where the 'facade presentation of adherence' unwittingly contributes to furthering not only the replication, stabilization and transmission of the Modesty Code schema but perpetuates the counter-strategy of the façade presentation itself. Both further contribute to stabilizing the representations of the Modesty Code schema.

I consistently observed and discussed with participants and others, the concealing of the individual's covert motives, thoughts, feelings, values, attitudes, hopes, dreams, beliefs, actions, and plans that have been strategically cloaked behind a façade presentation of adherence. They openly discussed that the 'façade presentation of adherence' is a strategy that is employed to survive given the environment that the individual finds him or herself in and does not reflect the inner feelings and thoughts of the individual. Indviduals in Egypt who do not accept nor adhere (in varying degrees) to the Modesty Code schema, and who are unable or unwilling to leave this environment, are not free to express their inner self openly. Some want to speak out, to act differently, to state what they really think and feel, and so on, but simply are unable to overcome their fears of doing so. In all fairness, the consequences for doing so can be severe. Following the 'herd' and waiting for consensus is often based on a deeply embedded fear to be the 'different one', the one to step out of the 'crowd comfort'. This contributes to the culture of silence and the culture of secrecy.

10. THE EFFECT: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEIRLOOMS

The last factor herein discussed, that contributes to the slow rate of transformation of the Modesty Code schema is the resulting impact on both the individual and the environment from the interwoven interaction of the above stated factors.

The psychological heirlooms (anxieties, fears, distrust, suspiciousness, jealousy, envy, anger, frustration, xenophobia, prejudices, stereotypes, manipulation, constant monitoring with one eye on 'the other') generated from the internalization of the Modesty

Code schema, along with the strategies to seek protection from these, are, in many cases, not critically questioned and reflected upon. In fact, they too are assimilated, replicated, and transmitted both within the family intergenerationally and from person to person outside the family, in a feedback loop alongside the Modesty Code representations. Sperber's statement that "cultural phenomena are ecological patterns of psychological phenomena" (Sperber 1996:60) would be quite apt here. An enormously high cost of energy expenditure (thought, feeling, behavior, and time) is exacted, engaged in, and expended, both at the individual and the societal level, to maintain the Modesty Code schema today.

There are at least two possible interpretations of the social consequences of this situation. This culture of silence and secrecy may facilitate the continued perpetuation of the Modesty Code schema and the need for counter-strategies such as the 'façade presentation of adherence', further adding to its stabilization. Or eventually the necessity for secrecy, silence, and duplicity might bring down the system, resulting in what seems to be a rapid and unpredictable change in Egyptian society.

To sum up, the chief feature that has enabled the modesty code schema to achieve a relatively successful stabilization is that it has a slow rate of transformation. I have identified ten important factors operating in concert that have contributed to slowing the mutation rate of the Modesty Code schema. To reiterate these ten elements are:

- the insularity of the agents of socialization;
- the nature of the methods (banking education, coercion and inculcation) used to encode and execute the schema;
- the selective encoding of the schema;
- the internalization of the Modesty Code schema;
- peer pressure;
- the role of religion;
- role of fear in the culture of silence
- culture of secrecy: *Sirr*
- cloaking device strategies of deception: the façade presentation of adher ence and the modesty mask;
- the effect: psychological and environmental heirlooms generated from not only the internalization of the Modesty Code schema, but the combined impact of all of the above forces.

CHAPTER 6: IN CLOSING

In Egypt individuals are 'born and conditioned into' a very old cognitive schema, a reality construct, that was executed long ago, has gained considerable momentum, and is still in motion. The distribution of the Modesty Code schema has been successful in its ability to replicate and stabilize both spatially and temporally, in that the cultural representations comprising the schema continue to be present and effecting daily life in rural and urban populations of Egypt.

The Modesty Code schema is much more than just the components and functions that comprise it. It is a gestalt in the sense that it takes on an existence of its own beyond the sum of its parts. The Modesty Code schema is deeply internalized psychologically within individuals and instantiated in a wide range of behaviours and institutions in the cultural-environments in which it holds a cognitive hegemony. It is a complex classificatory system, composed of a connectionist network of interwoven cultural representations wherein all members (i.e. representations, both mental and public) share an interpretive family resemblance among ideas, values, meanings, attitudes, and behavior, in the conceptualization and perceptions of reality. In one way or another they are all involved with drives associated with social *and* sexual attraction and desire, interaction, and intercourse - when expressed or manifested outside the framed space of marriage. as illicit and immoral. This has resulted in a specifically filtered conceptualization of reality, driven by the inference schemas of patriarchy and *endo*, operating at unconscious and tacit levels, that cognitively funnels the perceptions of those who have assimilated the schema into a particular way of seeing and being seen, and results in conceptualizing these sexual and social expressions as illicit and immoral.

This study has revealed that during the process of socialization, both vertical and horizontal, the transmission of selective representations implies that they can and do become unconsciously internalized in the individual, such that rather than the individual 'holding' a representation, they are 'held by' the representation, or in this case that which is composed of many representations, a schema. Belief is a powerful force and influential incentive to human action. It determines how we perceive by placing a filter (that may either impede or enhance) not only our perception of reality, but our ability to act in the world.

The selective information (Modesty Code schema content) shapes the individual cognitively and behaviorally, conditioning them to perceive and conceptualize reality in a definite way. This shaping or conditioning encourages individuals 'not to question' or to critically assess the information available to them, not to question or examine the inconsistencies, biases, prejudices, stereotyping and so on, and not to verify the content for themselves. It discourages the individual, and undermines her or him from engaging in, and developing, other forms of perceptual discernment and from behaving differently. It implies that some members must conform to others' definitions of reality, a definition that is generally the view of members of the dominant culture.

The Modesty Code schema emphasizes (through the patriarchal subschema) and is facilitated and reinforced through banking education, that there is to be a 'hierarchal ranking of authority' and 'compliance to that authority' no matter what form it comes in, parents, elders, including institutional authority such as tradition, religion, older legal codes. This empowers an outside (of Self) entity (religion, tradition, parent) with power over an individual by possessing the final say over important aspects of an individual's life. For example, mate selection and marriage or the right to divorce.

The Modesty Code schema and all three monotheistic Western religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share patriarchal and *endo* subschemas. All three monotheistic religions also draw from the domains of morality (moral/immoral) and law, (licit/illicit) to conceptualize and classify as *tabu*, (*halal/haram*, allowed/forbidden), social and sexual interaction between the sexes when expressed outside marriage. However, the Modesty Code schema is a gestalt whereby the focus of attention and concentration is directed *specifically* to the domain of the social and sexual attraction and desire, interaction and intercourse between the sexes that, over time, gathered momentum, and developed into its own unique signature pattern. Consequently, all three monotheistic Western religions have, in varying degrees, a vested interest in the further survival of the Modesty Code schema as they facilitate and reinforce, directly or indirectly, various representations in one another's schemas, thus perpetuating a feedback system of further replication and transmission. Yet monotheistic Western religion is only one of ten significant factors that have been collaboratively working together for a very long time and contribute to slowing the mutation rate of the Modesty Code schema and furthering the stabilization of its representations.

When cultural representations become endemic in a cultural-environmental space, and particularly, as in the case of the Modesty Code schema, hold a cognitive hegemony, the entire psychological-environmental ambiance is permeated with the influence of these cultural representations. The expenditure of energy that this schema consumes is enormous and its impact is felt socially and economically throughout the society. One impact of the Modesty Code schema on the economic development in Egypt is that it is inconceivable for an unmarried male and female to share an apartment, no matter how economical that may be, especially considering the housing shortage. Individuals in lower socio-economic statuses are unable to meet the demands of a marriage. Consequently, males are marrying much later than in the past, or worrying if they will ever have the opportunity to do so. The economic consequences of trying to accommodate the Modesty Code schema can be observed throughout Egypt.

When respondents and others spoken with in Egypt spoke about the various kinds of Modesty Code content that is transmitted to them, both vertically and horizontally, they explicitly referred to specific kinds of ideas, values, feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and institutions (religious and traditional) that concern males and females and their ability to interact freely socially and sexually. They also speak about where they believe these cognitive constructions come from. Some are attributed to ethnic identity, some to tradition, most however, are attributed to religion. They are also willing to admit that they simply 'do not know' and that they just routinely followed them because of ethnic identity, tradition or religion.

They added that they also recognize that many of the conceptualizations and perceptions of reality that have been transmitted day after day through inculcation are "old-fashioned", "prejudiced", "rooted in fear", and yet that they, too, are expected, or demanded to retain, share and transmit them, notwithstanding the fact, that they "do not believe" nor agree with them. Even the 'most traditional of traditional' persons complained of the ideas, values, attitudes, and behavior that are transmitted as being "old-fashioned" and how they "wanted change".

Consequently, respondents stated they wanted out of the imposed cognitive constructions that do not resonate with their own inner desires, feelings, values, attitudes, and thoughts. This was a consistently articulated testimony.

Despite the fact the Modesty Code schema has a cognitive hegemony in Egypt, findings present a clear statement that not all 'residents of Egypt' have a whole hearted commitment to the Modesty Code schema - as the central game of life, as evidenced by the both the above testimony and the ubiquitous use of the *façade presentation of adherence* and *modesty mask* as a survival strategy employed to avoid detection of any behavior that lies outside the schema.

This clearly points to the fact that a process of change is not only already occurring, but more specifically, that the rate of transformation is increasing. In fact, the Modesty Code schema has become for many, what Shore (1995:52) refers to as a "dead model" whereby "members of a community will fail to fully internalize a cultural model because their personal experiences are incompatible with the conventional model".

The counter-strategies of the *façade presentation of adherence* and *modesty mask,* although deviant from the perspective of the Modesty Code schema, does in fact also have a guiding cultural rule structure - a cultural rule set that shadows the Modesty Code schema. Moreover, while the cloaking device of *'façade presentation of adherence'* with its accompanying 'modesty mask' may enable an individual to escape on one level (it does afford the individual the opportunity to be overlooked and engage in behavior outside the schema, and it can and does, save the lives of individuals). On another level, however, it does not enable an individual to escape from having to present a façade of adherence.

Consequently, there is a feedback loop where the 'facade presentation of adherence' unwittingly contributes to furthering not only the replication, stabilization and transmission of the Modesty Code schema but perpetuates the counter-strategy of the façade presentation itself. Both further contribute to stabilizing the representations of the Modesty Code schema.

We now live in unprecedented times due to the communication-technological revolution that is impacting the world globally. Communication-technology has enabled us to reach out and touch one another in ways that are unparalleled. Exposure and accessibility to a range of mediums (including other people) that transmit new representations make it very difficult for those who advocate such entrenched schemata to continue to impose and maintain their insularity and control.

Consequently, the distribution and acceptance of the Modesty Code schema was more successful in the past than it is today and it will be even less so in the future. In other words, the numbers of people who subscribe to the mental and pubic representations that constitute the Modesty Code schema are decreasing. Hence, the stability of the schema is diminishing. The insularity of cognitive conditioning functioning at the family level of socialization (and by extension other institutional forms of transmission, namely tradition and religion) that facilitates continued internalization, replication, maintenance and transmission of the Modesty Code schema is breaking down, including the unquestioning adherence to the sources transmitting these representations. The communications revolution is in fact responsible for much of this destabilization by infiltrating the traditional barriers set in place to demonize and keep out, as much as possible, *exo* influences.

In conclusion, this study is limited for the most part to lower Egypt. Thus descriptions and analysis of the mental (perceptions, conceptualizations, attitudes, values and so on) and public (behavior, institutions such as veiling, hymen reconstruction and so on) representations of the Modesty Code schema as experienced and stated by participants and others spoken with in Egypt, and observed by the researcher, is also limited to this area. Nevertheless, given the general or abstract analysis of the nature of the Modesty Code schema and its replication, maintenance, and transmission, results are likely generalizable not only to other regions of Egypt, but also to other cultural-environmental regions where the Modesty Code schema holds a cognitive hegemony, for example the Middle East, and various countries of Africa. However, the responses to the Modesty Code schema, in particular those that resist its replication, maintenance and transmission, will vary in the degree of its expression in each area. For example, I suspect that today, in Lebanon, there would be a more overt display of rejection of the Modesty Code schema than is currently occurring in Afghanistan, while in Saudi Arabia or Iran the necessity for the cloaking device strategies of the *façade presentation of adherence* and the modesty mask will still be necessary survival strategies, in contrast to say Lebanon or Dubai.

Ten years ago, Ortner (1996:47) concluded that to date no framework has been provided "for encompassing and accounting for the [Modesty Code] phenomenon as a whole in cross-cultural, cross-class, and cross-sex perspective". This thesis does, in fact, provide not only a balanced sex, class, and cross-cultural methodology and analysis, thereby contributing to filling this gap, but it also incorporates diverse ethnic and religious perspectives. Moreover, as Casson (1983) cited in (D'Andrade 1995) earlier pointed out, connectionist schema theory, is a "broad, unified theoretical framework that has the potential to integrate research in cognitive anthropology and cognitive science generally". When connectionist schema theory is utilized in conjunction with the knowledge and understanding of the process of cognitive conditioning occurring during the socialization process, as well as an 'epidemiology of representation' approach, a wider integration of research is enabled, providing insights and explanations for the replication, continued maintenance and transmission of certain cultural representations, or that which is composed of many representations, a schema.

The approach advocated here is to recognize that the greatest threat to the Modesty Code schema, or any schema or representation that an individual is 'held by', is the conscious effort to deconstruct those cultural representations that have been taken-for-granted and are unconsciously internalized and are influencing and shaping the individual on unconscious levels. It requires great effort and courage, critical and reflective conscious thinking, creativity and innovation. This puts the responsibility on the individual to critically question and examine all information transmitted to him or her, and to assess its validity. Verify for oneself! In doing so, one more than limits the ability for such information to continue to be unconsciously replicated, one actually destroys it. Deconstructing and elucidating the cognitive conditioning underlying the Modesty Code schema can better inform policy makers and those working with cultural aspects of development, especially with respect to traditions.

The findings of this study are not limited to the disciplines of cultural and cognitive Anthropology and Education. The fact that the individual and a cultural environment can be unconsciously 'held by' cognitive schemas, speaks to the working of the human mind. This transcends academic boundaries. Referring back to the first quote in this thesis by Toffler, the essence of this dissertation is not about learning, it is about unlearning and relearning.

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